



NOW THEN.

MICHAEL KRUEGER. SCUBA. MARKET PLEASURE.
A MAGAZINE FOR SHEFFIELD. ISSUE 22. FREE.



WELL, YOU CAN'T SAY WE DIDN'T TRY.

January is a hard month – financially, emotionally, spiritually – so we decided to scale back our operations to a limited print run. Those of you reading this in the flesh could be holding a future rarity. Those of you who are not should not worry - we will be back in force next month.

We start the New Year with an issue of cheap buses, just asylum, fair voting, pornography, poetry and seven-legged spiders, on top of copious music reviews and an interview with Hotflush label head Scuba. Art comes from Kansas-based Michael Krueger, whose patchwork drawings are a nice change for Now Then in a new decade.

Also don't miss the launch of our next mag at the Forum on February 7th, featuring live performances from Denis Jones and Renegade Brass Band and an art market from 2pm.

Happy New Year.

SAM.

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THEN MAGAZINE. ENJOY THE READ.

OPUS

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LOCALCHECK:

SHEFFIELD COMMITTEE TO DEFEND ASYLUM SEEKERS (CDAS).

"STILL HUMAN, STILL HERE" SAYS THE STICKER CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP MAKING ASYLUM SEEKERS DESTITUTE. BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT IS DESTITUTION? AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ASYLUM SEEKER IN BRITAIN IN 2010?

With a general election nearing, asylum seekers are increasingly scapegoats, as politicians outbid one another to play the race card. The struggle to hold on to dignity and humanity is exemplified by people like Claude Ndeh, who fought a two-year battle to keep his family safe from deportation. He won his fight to stay. Or Aman Ali from Afghanistan, who also won the right to stay, but not before he was disabled, possibly for life, after a fall on a building site when he was made destitute and penniless. Or Samuel Musarika and Sarah Kawuma, who to this day are campaigning to stay in Sheffield, the city that they have come to call their home.

Sheffield Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers (CDAS) draws on the strength of the Sheffield community – trade unions, churches, religious organisations, voluntary bodies, individuals and musicians.

Sheffield has a long and proud history of dissent. It welcomed the French Revolution with open arms, staged a Chartist rebellion and was at the heart of the steel and miners' strikes. In the 1970s Sheffield took in Chileans who fled the fascist dictatorship of Pinochet. More recently, people from the Middle East – in particular Iraq, many of them Kurdish – and from countries across Africa have settled here. All these countries have a number of things in common. They are often UK-sponsored war zones. They have governments propped up by Western powers and multinational companies. Many of them are former British colonies where English is widely spoken.

That said, most refugees do not come here, although to read the popular press you would not think so. Most tend to flee to the next town or village. Some escape to the next country. In Iran they have millions of refugees from the war in Afghanistan, for example. Some, a minority, seek refuge in this country.

A person seeking refugee status – which is a human right enshrined under international law since the Second World War – is an asylum seeker. Although the Government says it will deal with asylum applications quickly and fairly, in reality it does neither. Victims of torture and persecution are routinely denied the right to stay.

For Samuel Masarika, one of the hardest things to bear is being told that the Government does not believe you. He left Zimbabwe because he and his family were threatened by Mugabe's thugs. So he waits, in limbo - five years already waiting for a Home Office decision.

Sam says: "The danger is you get depressed. You think there is nothing you can do. Fortunately I have had help and support and I'm still here and still fighting to stay."

Others are not so lucky. Those who are isolated and without the support of a strong campaign can find themselves deported to some of the most dangerous places on the planet.

"It's all to fill a Government quota," said Greg from Sheffield Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers. "New Labour, with the Tories barking in the wings, think it will gain them votes. But the human cost is high. Many people returned are never heard of again. At best they have to disappear in their home country; at worst they are taken away and face imprisonment or death. This is no way to treat victims."

Claude Ndeh says: "I will always be there supporting the organisations like CDAS and ASSIST. My children's lives were put at risk by the Home Office when I was taken from my home in the very early morning. They took the children and me to a detention centre, but they wouldn't let me bring their medication. Two of my children have sickle cell anaemia. They got very ill. They threatened to send us back to Cameroon, but it is a malaria zone and because my children have sickle cell they cannot fight malaria. They could have died.

"It's a long fight, but we always say 'the fight goes on'. You can't stop fighting for justice - not when so many people are treated this way."

Sheffield has a uniquely strong network of people who open up their homes, give their time and money, and fight alongside asylum seekers for dignity and justice. Sheffield Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers has evolved into a forum for anti-deportation campaigns in the city.

"An injury to one is an injury to all," reads the slogan on many trade union banners down the years.

Sheffield has not forgotten its radical past, nor its role in shaping a better future.

For more information, visit cdas-sheffield.org.uk.

From: Jane Gilles
Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2008 12.19pm
To: David Thorne
Subject: Overdue account

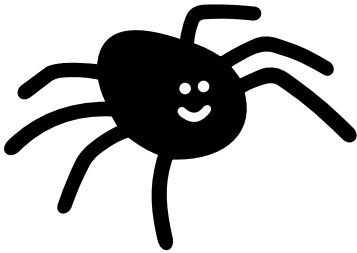
Dear David,
Our records indicate that your account is overdue by the amount of \$233.95. If you have already made this payment please contact us within the next 7 days to confirm payment has been applied to your account and is no longer outstanding.

Yours sincerely, Jane Gilles

From: David Thorne
Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2008 12.37pm
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Re: Overdue account

Dear Jane,
I do not have any money so am sending you this drawing I did of a spider instead.
I value the drawing at \$233.95 so trust that this settles the matter.

Regards, David.



From: Jane Gilles
Date: Thursday 9 Oct 2008 10.07am
To: David Thorne
Subject: Overdue account

Dear David,
Thankyou for contacting us. Unfortunately we are unable to accept drawings as payment and your account remains in arrears of \$233.95. Please contact us within the next 7 days to confirm payment has been applied to your account and is no longer outstanding.

Yours sincerely, Jane Gilles

From: David Thorne
Date: Thursday 9 Oct 2008 10.32am
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Re: Overdue account

Dear Jane,
Can I have my drawing of a spider back then please.

Regards, David.

From: Jane Gilles
Date: Thursday 9 Oct 2008 11.42am
To: David Thorne
Subject: Re: Re: Overdue account

Dear David,
You emailed the drawing to me. Do you want me to email it back to you?

Yours sincerely, Jane Gilles

From: David Thorne
Date: Thursday 9 Oct 2008 11.56am
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Overdue account

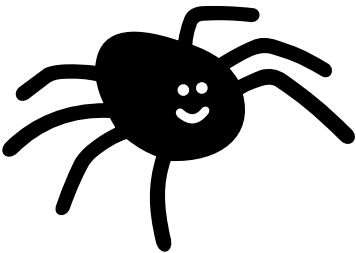
Dear Jane,

Yes please.

Regards, David.

From: Jane Gilles
Date: Thursday 9 Oct 2008 12.14pm
To: David Thorne
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Overdue account

Attached <spider.gif>



From: David Thorne
Date: Friday 10 Oct 2008 09.22am
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Whose spider is that?

Dear Jane,
Are you sure this drawing of a spider is the one I sent you? This spider only has seven legs and I do not feel I would have made such an elementary mistake when I drew it.

Regards, David.



27B/6.

WHOSE SPIDER IS THAT?

27SLASHB6.COM

From: Jane Gilles
Date: Friday 10 Oct 2008 11.03am
To: David Thorne
Subject: Re: Whose spider is that?

Dear David,
Yes it is the same drawing. I copied and pasted it from the email you sent me on the 8th.
David your account is still overdue by the amount of \$233.95.
Please make this payment as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely, Jane Gilles

From: David Thorne
Date: Friday 10 Oct 2008 11.05am
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Automated Out of Office Response

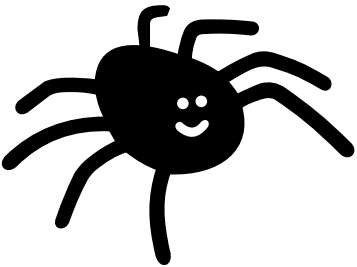
Thankyou for contacting me.
I am currently away on leave, travelling through time and will be returning last week.

Regards, David.

From: David Thorne
Date: Friday 10 Oct 2008 11.08am
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Re: Re: Whose spider is that?

Hello, I am back and have read through your emails and accept that despite missing a leg, that drawing of a spider may indeed be the one I sent you. I realise with hindsight that it is possible you rejected the drawing of a spider due to this obvious limb ommission but did not point it out in an effort to avoid hurting my feelings. As such, I am sending you a revised drawing with the correct number of legs as full payment for any amount outstanding. I trust this will bring the matter to a conclusion.

Regards, David.



From: Jane Gilles
Date: Monday 13 Oct 2008 2.51pm
To: David Thorne
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Whose spider is that?

Dear David,
As I have stated, we do not accept drawings in lei of money for accounts outstanding.
We accept cheque, bank cheque, money order or cash. Please make a payment this week to avoid incurring any additional fees.

Yours sincerely, Jane Gilles

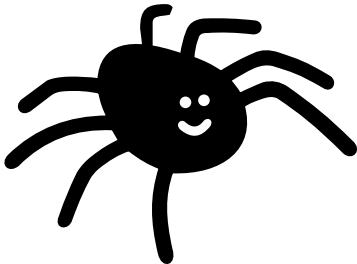
From: David Thorne
Date: Monday 13 Oct 2008 3.17pm
To: Jane Gilles
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Whose spider is that?

I understand and will definitely make a payment this week if I remember. As you have not accepted my second drawing as payment, please return the drawing to me as soon as possible. It was silly of me to assume I could provide you with something of completely no value whatsoever, waste your time and then attach such a large amount to it.

Regards, David.

From: Jane Gilles
Date: Tuesday 14 Oct 2008 11.18am
To: David Thorne
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Whose spider is that?

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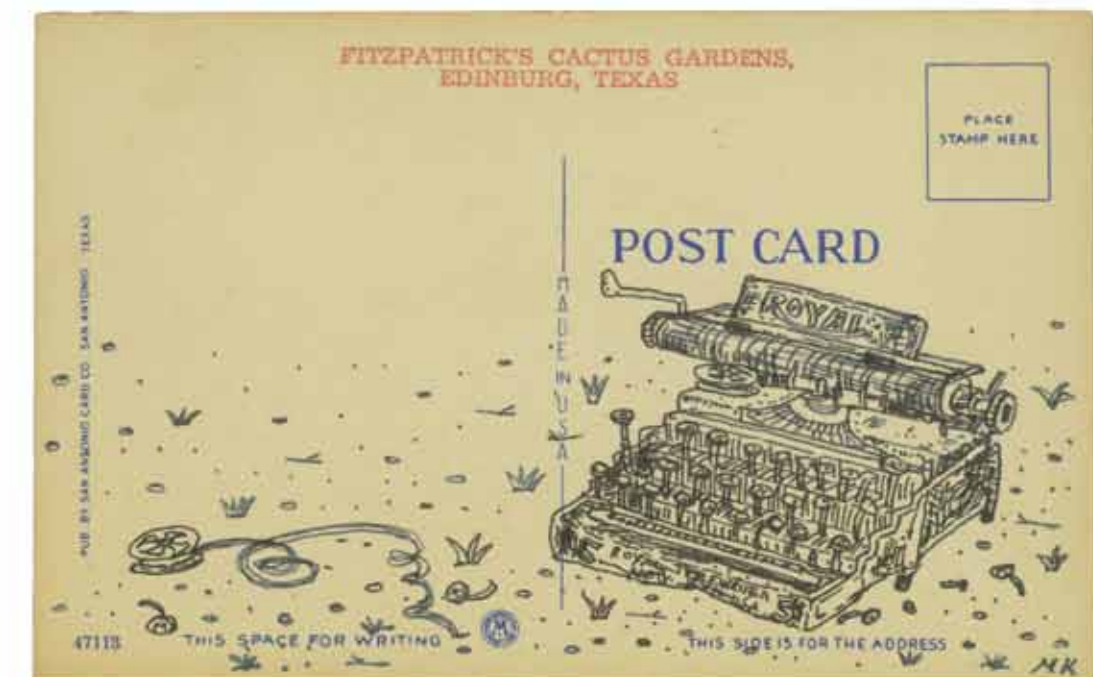
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WE WANT OUR BUSES BACK.

THE CAMPAIGN TO RE-REGULATE SHEFFIELD BUS SERVICES.

VERY FEW ISSUES AROUSE THE ANGER OF SHEFFIELDERS MORE THAN THE CHANGES IN BUS SERVICES OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS. A CITY THAT WAS ONCE A BYWORD FOR A CHEAP, EXCELLENT SERVICE HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE PLACES IN THE COUNTRY TO DO SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS CATCH A BUS.

In the first half of the 1980s, Sheffield under David Blunkett, like the Greater London Council under Ken Livingstone, introduced and developed a 'fares fair' policy. Local taxation was used to subsidise the building of an excellent, cheap and integrated bus service which was to become the envy of the country and beyond. The legal defeat of the GLC over the issue and the subsequent abolition of that body led to the de-regulation and effective privatisation of bus services during 1986-7. Things were soon to be very different.

In 2005, the main operator in Sheffield, First, increased fares four-fold, resulting in a day ticket rising from £2 to £3.50 in just a few months. This action, combined with route and service cuts, led to great anger and the formation of We Want Our Buses Back in an attempt to bring together individuals and groups fighting the system. We launched a city-wide petition calling for the re-regulation of the bus service in Sheffield that quickly collected many thousands of names and shook the Council when it was presented in October 2005. In November that year, WWoBB held a protest march attended by hundreds of people that attracted lots of media interest and brought an offer from the BBC for WWoBB to join a live debate on Radio Sheffield the following week with First bosses, Council leaders and transport experts. That occasion marks the first and only time bus company bosses met us face-to-face to hear the arguments.

WWoBB try to operate on many fronts. We agitate amongst people who are already angry about the service, but seek to channel the anger that many feel towards the local and national politicians. We try to keep the issue in the news as much as possible. Most of all, we gather names and give out leaflets explaining how the current system came into being and encourage people to help us do something about it. We also get a lot of our information from listening to people tell us how service cuts and fare rises are affecting them and their communities. We have held public meetings addressed by two Sheffield Council Transport spokesman and local bus driver's union representatives.

WWoBB fought over a period of several months in 2006 to re-instate a service cut from the Pearce Road estate in Darnall which isolated an elderly community who were unable to cross Prince of Wales Road to access the service. That campaign culminated in a sit down protest, in the road, by dozens of pensioners in Darnall and the refusal of First bosses to come and talk to the campaigners, despite the attendance of BBC and ITV cameras. In January 2007, we held another march in the city centre after yet another fare rise by First which was addressed by all the parties on Sheffield Council (including, bizarrely, the Tories). After this protest, the City Council passed as policy their official support for regulation and public control of bus services. Since then successive administrations in Sheffield have pledged to fight the Government for the power to restrict the power of the private operators.

The legal possibilities for changing the system at present are complicated. Until 2008 there only existed the prospect of 'Quality Contracts', which committed the firms to agreements with the Local Transport Authorities. However, the 2008 Transport Act has given Councils the power to enforce partial regulation where it is 'in the public interest' - which is surely the case in Sheffield. The current Council has stated its intention to move towards achieving this aim in the next couple of years. Under such a system, companies like First and Stagecoach would still run the services, but under limitations on fares. This would be much better than the current system, but far short of what we would like to see and far short of the pre-1986 service.

So, where are we now? Recent weeks have seen strikes on First buses in South Yorkshire over the imposition of a pay freeze for staff, as well as strikes in Sheffield against bullying management at Olive Grove depot, where long-standing drivers have been sacked without warning (staff on higher wages and better pension arrangements). It is a key part of our campaign to unite drivers and passengers who are both being mistreated by the companies and the system itself. It is in our interests to support the drivers when they fight the same people who cut services and increase fares. Also, First have pledged over the last couple of years to only increase fares annually, in January, and we are at the time of year when an announcement is due.

All in all, the future is uncertain for buses in Sheffield. It seems passengers, the Council, local MPs, pedestrians and cyclists are united on one side, while the Government and the private firms are on the other. WWoBB will fight to ensure that words become actions from the politicians and that, just as importantly, people have a campaign to voice the anger that exists out there. The best way to achieve that is if people join us, offer energy and ideas, help shape the campaign and fight for public services - not private profit - running our lives. Coming up in the next few months we have Council Elections and a General Election and a chance to affect the political mood on this issue, but change will only come through effective organising, visible protests and a campaign that unites all of us who think this is worth fighting for.

WWoBB would love to hear from other groups, campaigns and individuals who want to join us or just work with us to achieve our aims. Please contact us on 07810 628740, wewantourbusesback@hotmail.co.uk or wwobb.org.



THIS FRIGHTENS ME.

VOTING AND THE BRITISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

GEORGE OSBORNE IS 38 YEARS OLD. HE WILL TAKE OVER THE ECONOMY IN THE WORST STATE IT HAS BEEN IN SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THIS FRIGHTENS ME.

The Conservative Party exist in a contradiction, on one hand they want to stop a third runway at Heathrow, on the other they would repeal the Human Rights act. They express deep convictions about major banking reform, yet in Europe they remove themselves from the CCP, the governing and most powerful block in the EU, and align themselves with far right extremists, some of whom attend Nazi remembrance marches.

The Conservative party want to portray themselves as all things to all people, yet underneath the veneer lies the same outdated modus operandi that Maggie Thatcher so balefully used to condemn a generation to the dole. Alas the Labour party has no answers; they have palpably run out of ideas. Their judicial laws are becoming more draconian, and if they win the next election it would still be a disaster for this country.

The best we can hope for is a hung parliament, which would happen if none of the parties gained enough votes to form a government. The Liberal Democrats would be key in this instance, with Sheffield MP Nick Clegg acting as a kingmaker. The Lib Dems are perpetually the bridesmaids of British politics. They average 20 percent of the public vote, but get only 63 out of 646 seats in the House of Commons. Clegg has been criticised for being a shoddy communicator, and some say this is irrelevant. Yet Britain's greatest leaders, such as Churchill and Lloyd George, were magnificent orators. The ability to express an opinion and inspire their fellow citizens should not be underplayed. In British politics today there is a lack of such leaders, and we are all worse off for it.

Only 21% of the 44 million electors supported Labour in the 2005 general election, which shows the blatant unfairness of our current electoral system. Every MP Labour gets equates to 26,858 votes, a Tory 44,241, and for the Liberal Democrats it is a mind boggling 98,484.

Basically, 353 Labour MPs were elected on 9.48m votes, 196 Conservatives on 8.67m votes and 60 Liberal Democrats with 5.9m votes. It is embarrassing for a nation who prides itself on being a progressive democracy and invades other countries for being 'undemocratic'. So what other voting systems are there?

Proportional representation is used in the European elections. In this system you vote for a party, not a candidate. Each party nominates candidates and the seats are shared out according to vote. So if there were three seats and the Labour party won 60% of the vote and the Conservatives 30%, Labour would have two seats and the Conservatives one.

Single Transferable Vote is used in the London mayoral elections. This is a complicated beast, but offers a fairer representation for everybody: each constituency elects three to five candidates, and voters rank them: one, two and three, by preference. Candidates must win a pre-set number of votes in order to be elected (the quota). After voting, all first preferences are counted and candidates up to the first quota are deemed elected. If some seats remain vacant, then a second round of voting must take place, where elected candidates surplus votes come into play. Those voters' second preferences are counted, boosting support for so-far unelected candidates. By the time this round is finished the quota may have been met. Additionally, the third preferences are counted to see if any quotas are met. If vacancies remain, the candidate with the lowest first-choice support drops out and their votes apply according to the next preferences. This process is continued until all seats are filled.

It would probably also produce a coalition government, a centrist moderate one that better reflected the wishes of the people, and would almost certainly feature the Liberal Democrats.

Labour claim that they will hold a referendum in 2011 if they win the election, yet they stated in their 1997 general election manifesto that they would hold a vote on proportional representation.

David Cameron came of age in Thatcher's Britain. He is still not so far removed from that epoch of Conservatism that believed in a small and isolationist state that damaged our standing in the world; a government that fuelled the cult of the self, that led to our current economic meltdown. Make no mistake - David Cameron is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Yet the alternative, Gordon Brown, is no better.

So the best we can hope for is a hung parliament, where Nick Clegg would come to the fore; and he should demand voting reform above all else. Write to your local MP and tell him what you think. He may soon be much more powerful than you might imagine. This is essential to modernise our democracy, so that democracy is a reality; not just a word on a page that has a hollow meaning.

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IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD.

SARA HILL.

WE ALL KNOW THE NET IS THE PLACE TO GO FOR PORN THESE DAYS.

You're never more than four clicks away from naked people at any one time (especially if you type 'naked people' into Google and turn the safe search off... apparently) and that's a lot less socially fraught than popping to your local newsagents and raiding the top shelf. Estimates for the annual turnover of the online adult entertainment industry vary from \$1-3 billion; it's a difficult industry to quantify for obvious reasons, but the number is always a big one. However, not all pornography is created equal and this is not a debate about the rights and wrongs of Hugh and his bunnies. There are things that lurk in the dark corners of the internet that would never make it to your newsagents, or even the local fetish shop, but are thriving online.



Sexual preferences are normally something left to personal tastes - whatever gets you going - but as a society we draw a line where that personal choice causes harm to others against their will. The global nature of the internet has made this difficult to enforce. An example that illustrates this well is a website called The Rape Camp. In 1999, an American named Dan Sandler residing in Cambodia announced a live bondage sex show on his website. The Rape Camp sold pay-by-the-minute video of women trafficked into Cambodia from Vietnam, bound and tortured. Handcuffs in the bedroom may be a lifestyle choice, but electrocuted, urinated on and raped after being sold clearly crosses that aforementioned line. The site also offered to arrange deals for plane tickets to Phnom Penh on the basis that "unlike Thailand, if our prostitutes refuse your advances you can beat them into compliance" (Rape Camp website, March 2000).

Once brought to the attention of Mu Sochua, Cambodia's Minister for Women's Affairs, Dan Sandler was arrested, although the site remained online for a further seven months as it was hosted on an American server. The US Embassy intervened with the Cambodian authorities on Sandler's behalf and arranged for him to be deported rather than prosecuted; he never faced charges.

These days reports of people trafficking for prostitution and exploitation are nothing new. They are now so assimilated into our collective pictures of the world that every crime drama or procedural cop show has done a forced prostitution storyline. The cross-border aspect of this particular tale goes further than simply moving the people, however; an American, in Cambodia, using Vietnamese women and selling back to Americans as his main client base. The 'punters' no longer have to be in the same continent as those they are abusing. For enough money, a client's requests for sexual torture can be transmitted across the earth, fulfilled and footage relayed back in seconds. It's a brave new world.

There are many things which made The Rape Camp possible. It was an intersection of technology, sex, violence and market freedom. Lifetimes could be spent exploring each of these factors, but given the current climate it seems appropriate to focus on market freedom. It is not just the global nature of the internet that allows this crime; its lack of regulation is also key. The freedom of the internet is unique and beautiful in its scope. A source of fact, fiction, expression, creativity and love (in six months or your money back, with Match.com), it quickly becomes an integral part of the lives of those with access.

The internet is also one of the closest things to a genuinely free market that we actually have. The others are curtailed by monitoring organisations, subsidies, quotas and interventionist government policies. The internet has remained remarkably free of these things. Not entirely, of course - China famously censors websites and larger companies can still make anti-competitive moves, but it's pretty close, and most governments, especially those in the West, work to ensure it remains so.

The reason for the strict laissez-faire attitude to the internet can be traced back to a man named Ira Magaziner. Ever heard of him? Few have, and yet his influence is felt worldwide. Magaziner, referred to as the 'spiritual father of the internet', was Senior Advisor to the US President for Policy Development from 1993 to 1998. He coordinated the US government's strategy and policy towards the internet and the digital economy, championing self-regulation by the private sector and commercial interests over any involvement by the state, suggesting that this would in fact harm economic growth.

An essential part of that online economic growth is and has been the sex industry. The Rape Camp was a small operation in the greater view of a market where some websites turn over \$100 million a year (Hughes, 2000) and there are tens of thousands of individually-run operations. The market research firm Datamonitor reported that sales of adult content (not including advertising, goods or any other 'sundry') accounted for 69% of total internet content sales in the US and Western Europe. That is huge. Of course, it is a minority of this that involves trafficking, non-consent and torture, but given the massive sums of money at stake it is not hard to see how going easy on regulating the industry can be in a government's interests. Is it coincidence, then, that since 1993 there has been a drop of 86% in the number of obscenity prosecutions in the United States? Even the most extreme images, such as torture, have not been taken to court.

The intense competition and high stakes have led many of the operators of violent pornography websites to attract new business through the constant addition of more and more extreme images (Hughes, 2000). The marketing of these sites moved to focus more upon the violence than the sex - the content is valued for its depiction of pain and fear. Again we come up against the question of consent. If person A gains sexual pleasure from experiencing pain and person B gains that same pleasure from inflicting pain, surely they are a match made in heaven. Whilst some violent pornographic images are advertised as genuine rapes, others state that this is what women enjoy and they have all volunteered. Clearly neither is entirely true for the whole market.

One of many problems with market self-regulation is that this is not considered an issue. The market is inherently amoral; if there is a demand and therefore profit to be made, a supply will soon spring up. Economic models depict producers and consumers as rational utility and profit maximisers. Individuals simply act in their own interests within the marketplace and therefore the market will move towards equilibrium with Adam Smith's 'benevolent hand' ensuring all is as it should be. However, in reality, individuals can be as horrific as they can be wonderful. It may seem an obvious point - we have laws against murder because, although we know most people would never consider it, there are always a few and the law is there for them - nevertheless this is not an obvious point to those advocating non-interference in all things internet.

You may have noticed this article has reached no real conclusions. I have none to offer. Clearly there are issues with the status quo and, just as clearly, there is a fine line between personal freedom and the abuse of another's freedom. The obvious place to draw that line rests with the issue of consent, but this is a difficult thing to determine in the digital world where what is thought to be a blurry film with some Photoshop work and dodgy acting could just as easily be blurry footage of an innocent person's life being shattered forever.

State intervention has not proved successful or popular with voters in the past, but, even if it were, the global nature of the web ensures it would require a global consensus were action to be taken. When have we ever had global consensus? An independent international body, then? Not without its promise but fraught with difficulties and impracticalities, not to mention the potential damage to civil liberties. So once again we return to the individual. Not just the individuals directly involved with this industry or the law or the internet, but everyone who plays a part in their own society. Sexual abuse is a subject we don't like to talk about beyond tabloid headlines about child pornography. As long as this remains a hidden problem it will continue to grow because there is still profit to be made. We can all do something about this: make a fuss, think, learn, create a debate, shine a light in dark corners, digital or otherwise.

For more information and opportunities to get involved:

Amnesty International - Women's Action Network
amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=609

International Union of Sex Workers
iusw.org

Article References:

Donna Hughes, 2000, 'Sexual Exploitation and the Internet in Cambodia' Journal of Sexual Aggression 2000, University of Rhode Island

J. L. Gosset & S. Byrne, 2002, 'A Content Analysis of Internet Rape Sites' Gender & Society, Vol. 16, No. 5

Adam Smith, 1776 [1776], The Wealth of Nations, Classic Ed., Oxford University Press

Hi there Word Lifers. A bit quiet this month, but we'll back with a few shows in February. We will be promoting a show on Feb 12th down at The Theatre In The Mill in Bradford and back in Sheffield later on in the month at Café Euro. There will be some open mic slots going, so get writing and come on down. As ever, send your thoughts/poems/scribblings to us at subs@nowthensheffield.com.

To check event details as they come go to myspace.com/wordlifeuk.

See you soon,

JOE.



POETRY REVIEW.

DAMIAN WALFORD DAVIES.
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REVIEWER: NOEL WILLIAMS

The title tells you at once this poet's a keen observer of light: on a dying mullet ('Mullo' – its colour changes as it dies), on 'Cats' Eyes', on a prize-fighter ('The Fight'). His reflections have the precision of a miniaturist: many of the poems are spare on the page, short in lines and stanzas, exact, and exacting, in their language.

He's also particularly interested in unusual words, elevating this to a rationale for some poems, giving us more of wit than witness. 'Tomb Graffiti' is a description of the technicalities of a medieval tomb vandalised by contemporary writing. 'Heraldic' links the blaze of a stag in the headlights with an armourial blazon, setting heraldic and contemporary languages in contrast:

...my lights
a chevron rayonnant
on sable, leafshadows
bendypaly on mount
vert – brake, fuck,
brake....

But this is more than a set of exercises, In poems like 'Chopping Board' the observational yields to the interpretative, carried not by exact imagery, but by a lack of precision and associations called distantly ("some true wood", "something", "it seemed") rather than stark illumination. Well worth a read.

THE BATS.

The summer after you had gone was hot,
the nights airless, every window open wide.
What woke me in the early hours, my book
fallen shut in my lap, wine-glass tipped,
was the ear-throb like a racing heart.
I thought it was a moth, and startled up
then saw the bat, a pipistrelle, circling
like a particle of night. I helped it find its way,
switched out the lights, opened two doors
to the starless dark, felt it pass my face.
The other bat I keep. It's in my freezer
laid out in tissue in a plastic box.
I found it on my doorstep, like a gift
wrapped in its wings, no sign of life.
Its open eyes are beads of jet, its teeth
white needle tips, its feet are hands,
its wings, spread out against the light,
an x-ray of fine bones, each thumb a hook.
I take it out from time to time to look
and stroke it, feel it soften, put it back.

ANNE ATKINSON.

'The Bats' is taken from 'Drawing Water' due for publication in January 2010 by Smith/Doorstop Books.

THE BOUNDARY OF CALYNDA.

bala bala
rid them
plite hag
muttern

rid them
there rid them

rid them
there rid them

oocarriedem
ashore
oosaw them
swore

day stone em all to death
there
bala bala
breath

drive out there hex
for
bala bala

death

rid them
there rid them

rid them
there rid them

YONI OSMAN.

COUNCIL AXE.

SHEFFIELD BUSES AND THE ICE LOLLY EXPERIENCE™.

WHEN WINTER CLOSES ITS GRIP, TRAVELLING BY BUS TURNS INTO THE “ICE LOLLY EXPERIENCE”™. STORED IN A FREEZER, PLUCKED AT SOME RANDOM TIME INTO THAT LITTLE WARM BUS MOUTH, THEN DRIBBLING WETLY HOME. ALL FOR JUST A POUND OR SO. YET IF BUSES SEEM PRICED LIKE A FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION WITH A SIMILAR WAIT, IT HASN’T ALWAYS BEEN SO.

In the 1980s, Sheffield was the home of the 2p flat fare bus. With inflation, 2p in 1980 would be worth a whole 7p now. Sheffield Council subsidised buses from early morning till late at night so most people used them, even as the car began its march of on-demand travel. Yet the republic of South Yorkshire faltered; the fares began to rise: 5p, 10p. And then deregulation hit.

Deregulation brought a rainbow nation of bus companies to a city of bewildered passengers. Everything with a few seats and wheels turned up to tout for business, but after a while things settled down. First Group and Stagecoach are now the two main competitors. First Group are the pantomime villains - making massive profits, increasing fares every fortnight, and paying their drivers just enough so they don’t get tempted to do a runner with the takings. Stagecoach are the cheaper, cheery panto heroes - so long as you don’t want to travel after 7pm, or on Sundays, or anywhere that might not make easy cash.

After deregulation the Council doesn’t directly subsidise the services, but there is still plenty of money going in:

1. KEEPING LOSS MAKING ROUTES OPEN.

Away from the student ghettos and pensioner endz, quieter bits of Sheffield risk losing services. If a loss-making service is in the public interest, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive steps in with Government cash to subsidise it. So bus companies continually try to shift less-profitable routes into being subsidised, and the Transport Executive says “no” a lot. Profit from money-making routes can’t legally be used to keep other routes open, so if it really doesn’t work out, the route gets shut.

2. IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE.

Car drivers are generally of the opinion that they don’t cause traffic jams. Cars are small, clean and cute. Cars couldn’t cause anything as crap as a mile long jam of metal boxes full of burnt petrol fumes, imprisoning hundreds until their working day turns into madness. What causes traffic jams, besides pedestrians and the “car-hating Government”, is the terrible ogre of buses. Buses are mobile sewers packed with asylum seekers, criminals and cannibals. They deliberately cause traffic jams, hunting in packs to slow the poor car drivers down. Never mind that one bus could carry 60 people while 60 cars takes up 20 times the road space.

The kick in the teeth is that the Council installs “bus gates” and “bus lanes” to give the infernal bastards of public transport priority, thereby reducing again the freedom of the honest hard-working car driver till the only option is to travel by trebuchet. On the Wicker the Council advertised bus gates with a post-it note stuck to the third lamppost on the left. Those who drove straight into the bus-only zone got an automatic fine. Those who avoided the bus gate got an NVQ in mind-reading. After complaints from the thousands who got fined, the Council backed off. Now bus gates have big signs and restricted hours, which makes car drivers happier, but has hacked off the bus companies.

Improving bus gates is part of getting buses through faster. The bus companies like that because “we get you there faster” makes a better advert than “we still get stuck in queues but also leave you half a dogshit-strewn mile from home”. Bus gates and lanes turn the bus into a time-saving device, like washing machines and waterboarding. In return for buses being given priority, the major bus company in Sheffield, First Group, entered into a voluntary agreement to invest more and always ask the Council about changing routes. As the Council backed off from bus gates, so First tried to back off from the agreement. After some legal wrangles the agreement has held, but the betting is that the paperwork will be ditched this April and First Group will go and cut services for a laugh.

3. QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS.

Millions of pounds of Government cash have been spent on improving transport in the north of Sheffield, investing in kneeling and curtseying buses for the be-wheeled and be-zimmered, smiling lessons for bus drivers, and information displays giving bus arrival times to the minute (plus or minus half an hour).

4) FREE TRAVEL FOR PENSIONERS.

Everyone likes to think their nan gets a good deal in life, at least before she goes into a home and dies of daytime TV. So the Government came up with a bit of cash to give free bus travel for pensioners. But because it’s a deal between the Council and Government, it has to be really stupid. In this case, the Government bets how many pensioners will travel on buses in Sheffield and gives the Council the cash. The bus companies then tot up how many pensioners actually travelled around and asks the Council for the cash. If all the old folks stayed in sniffing glue the Council wins and coins it in. If all the oldies were joyriding about the city every day, the Council loses out. A system where the Government pays the right amount would not be as much fun.

With all this cash already flowing the way of the humble bus, could endless 7p bus rides be just around the corner? Sadly, buses now make the travelling tin sheds of the past look a bit rubbish, unless you get on the “Powell’s tin shed experience” for just 90p a ride. Everything costs more and cheap travel costs a stack of cash. A council report estimated free weekend buses in Sheffield would cost £20 million a year. Council departments across the board are tightening belts and fripperies like public art and children’s services are being cut for the sake of thousands, never mind millions.

One thing coming along is a quality bus contract. Once the legal hoops are sorted out, the Council could get control of what services run and when. It is re-regulation, about as popular as the plague with bus companies, but Sheffield Council are threatening to do it and a big local campaign, We Want Our Buses Back, is pushing hard as well. Beyond that is re-nationalisation, bringing bus companies back in-house. But that would be an even bigger investment and is unlikely.

Our fairground experience is likely to continue for some time, so just enjoy the ride and try not to throw up at the back.

[Click to page 13 for an article on We Want Our Buses Back...](#)

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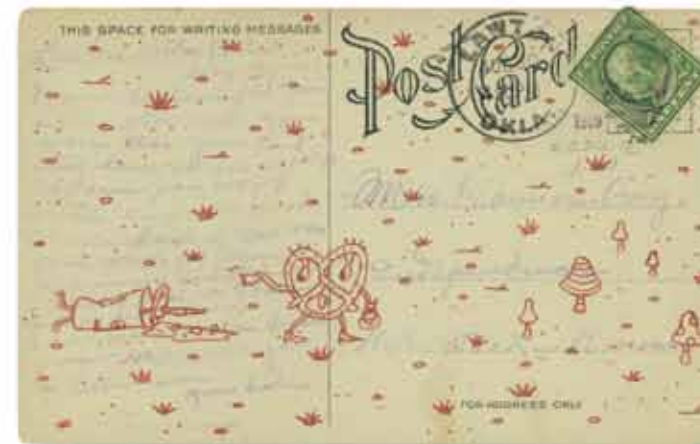
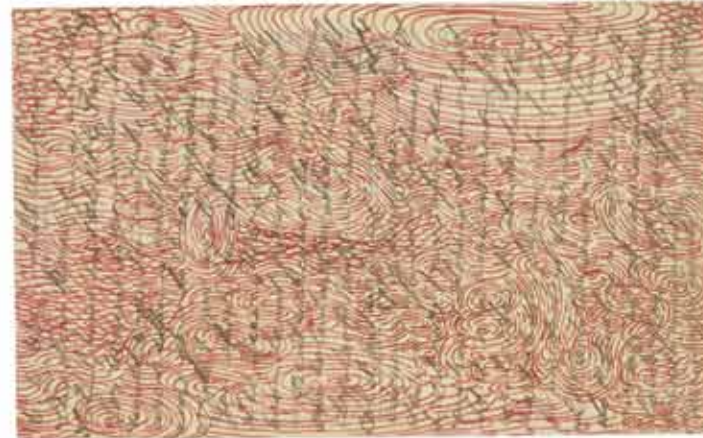
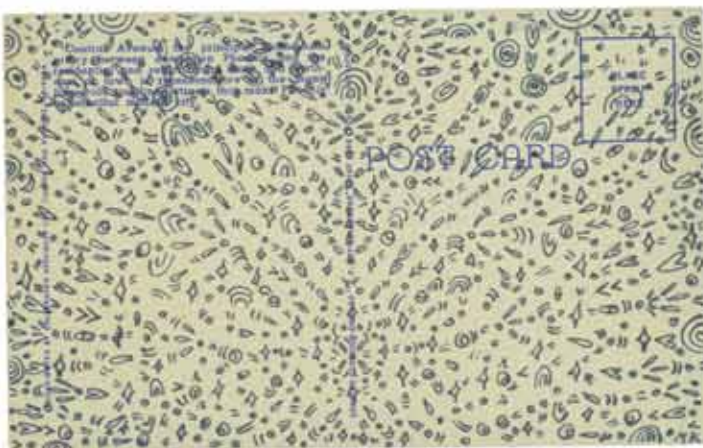
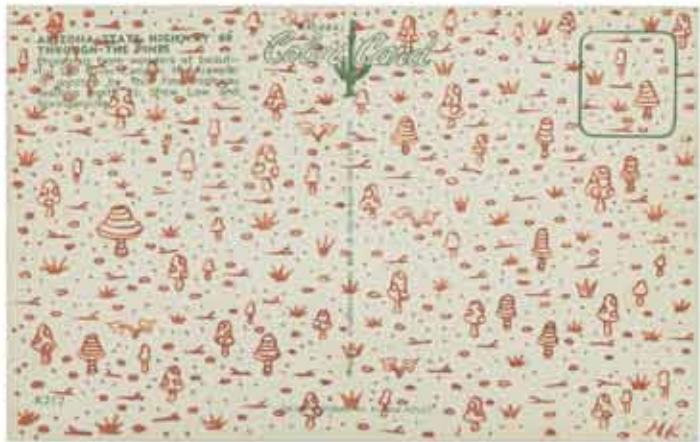
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MICHAEL KREUGER.

PROLIFIC DOODLE WIZARD KEEPING IT HANDMADE.

INTERVIEW BY MATT JONES.



NT. BASICS, PLEASE. WHAT STARTED YOU DRAWING?

I have never had any intention of being anything other than an artist, with the exception of a brief fantasy at age 4 of being a Wild West cowboy. Lucky for me, I never had an inkling of pressure from my family to do anything other than what my passions demanded. My father is an artist so I grew up in a household that encouraged and embraced creative activities. Even more than that, I was embedded in a world of hippy art projects - funky candle making, macramé, trippy abstraction, fiberglass dinosaurs in our backyard and eco-environmental conceptual sculpture.

NT. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF STARTING A NEW PIECE?

I tend to work on drawings and prints in series. Mostly the process is fairly organic and I generate ideas with freeform thinking, sketching, daydreaming and thematic research. In the past several years I have found great inspiration from reading about American history and finding meaningful ways to relate these historic narratives to my own life. The actual beginning of a new work of art almost always starts in the sketchbook or scribbled on a scrap of paper. I am a big believer in letting ideas flow onto the paper as soon as they come to me. I also gather lots and lots of source materials and have stacks of the stuff in my studio and tacked to the walls.

NT. WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM?

There are certain artists from history that I continually look at, like Goya and Daumier, and I am constantly absorbing contemporary art. Personally I find it important to stay abreast of contemporary art, partly for inspiration but more to feel connected to the great dialogue of art. Early on, prints and printmakers inspired me as a student of printmaking and I think that still resonates in my work. Just as important, I have lots of non-art sources of inspiration, such as skateboard culture, kitsch objects, t-shirt graphics, punk rock flyers, album cover art, old photographs, signage...the list goes on and on.

NT. TOOLS. WHAT DO YOU USE REGULARLY AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE?

I like a good pencil sharpener. I use a lot of colored pencils and paper. Having a background in printmaking, I have a healthy knowledge of materials and art technologies. I like all of the stuff that comes along with art making. I love the alchemy of art and printmaking and all the strange tools and materials; copper, acid, lithography stones, etching needles - all that medieval shit.

NT. WHAT OTHER ARTISTIC MEDIA HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON YOUR ART?

Music is probably the greatest influence outside of visual art. My mother ran a record store when I was a kid and my brother and I worked there with her for a while. For me making art and listening to music go hand in hand, and I am grateful to all of the musicians past and present who continue to inspire me. Currently I am listening to Real Estate, Carl Spidla, Ola Podrida, Tigerlillies, The Dirt Bombs, Michael Hurley, old soul music, blues, anything Mississippi Records puts out and (of course) Bob Dylan - always Bob Dylan. Also, I continue to be inspired by documentary films old and new.

NT. HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAYS?

I start my day drinking coffee until the fuzz clears, then I try and eat something and then I get to work. If I had my way I would sleep until noon everyday and stay up as late as I wanted. I love to work in my studio late into the night. As it is my days are usually a flurry of different activities, very disjointed, but I have learned to deal with that. I teach two days a week and usually spend a third day in meetings with students and faculty. I travel quite a bit - most recently I was in California for a month. Next stop is Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow. I am in a show at the Glasgow Print Studio and will be giving a lecture there and a workshop in Edinburgh at ECA.

NT. OUT OF YOUR RECENT WORK, WHICH PIECE HAVE YOU ENJOYED MAKING THE MOST?

I am usually most happy with whatever I am currently working on. My Mama always tells me that as a wee child I was happiest making something and that I was always happy with what I made. I think that is still true. Making art keeps me sane and happy. That said, making art ain't all shits and giggles - it is all hard work and often the greatest reward comes from the experiences that are the most physically, emotionally and intellectually difficult.

NT. HOW HAS YOUR ART EVOLVED OVER TIME?

I have always been one for experimentation, so I have worked with lots of different media over the years. For a while I was making work that used some appropriation and photography. These processes were slowly edged out of the studio in favor of pure drawing, although recently I have started using photography again with a new series of lithographs. These will be exhibited in Glasgow this month. My current studio work has been an aggressive return to drawing that is relatively unencumbered by tradition. I am disconnecting from much of what I have learned about drawing and relating to techniques that best allow me to lose track of the conscious world.

NT. HOW HAS ART IN GENERAL CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED?

The biggest changes have been churning in the waters since before I was born. Pluralism in art and greater cultural diversity are probably the hallmarks of my era so far. This makes for a tremendously rich and satisfying experience. I think pluralism really had its roots firmly planted in the 1960s and now it is really a full-blown kind of experience. The impact of the feminist movement of the 1960s (and really earlier than that) can be credited for much of what we see as change today in art and culture.

The most exciting thing to happen in the past few years on a smaller scale has been the incorporation of skateboard culture and street art, and more specifically the 'Beautiful Losers' show that Aaron Rose and Christian Strike curated. I am pretty stoked to see the resurgence of imagist work, humor in art, narrative and art that just couldn't give a piss about formal issues.

NT. WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I am currently working on a series of drawings and prints that draw on a variety of utopian imagery, from hippies to early American colonies. I am interested in making connections between the 1600-1670s and 1960-1970s and exploring themes of utopianism and the euphoria of communes and colonies. A lot of this stuff is going into the colored pencil drawings. I am also interested in using images and narrative to evoke tenderness, drunkenness, sorrow, humor, confusion, anxiety, nostalgia and decadence, all this oddly enough tinted with optimism.

NT. ANY TIPS ON HOW TO SURVIVE MAKING MONEY FROM YOUR ART? DO YOU FIND IT IMPORTANT?

Try to find people that you trust and believe in to give you advice. Try to find people to work with - a gallery, curator or collective - who trust and believe in you. Most importantly, make the art that is truly a manifestation of your deepest intellect and emotion. If you do this you will succeed. Contrary to what people believe, in the highly competitive art world, I think there is enough success out there for everyone who wants it.

I survive off my day job, but I do think it is important to engage the market and I am interested in being a part of the gallery scene. I still see this is the best avenue for an artist who makes pictures to navigate a path into the greater art world. I don't make anything with the idea that I can sell it or not - that is a shallow and dismal path. Once you do get something going with a gallery I think that you have to fight hard to keep that elephant out of your studio.

NT. WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE IN ART?

I greatly dislike the fact that young artists today feel like they have to have major success by the time they are 27 or they are a failure. I hope this changes soon; it is really a ghastly way to go about making a career in art. It is not uncommon at all for an artist to mature later in life and make their best work in their 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond. I would like to see the art world embrace the mid-career artists and older artists that have much to teach us.

NT. WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE IN ART?

Art that makes me smile is a combination of funny, clever and revelatory. Work by Tom Friedman, Chris Johanson, Scot Teplin, Jo Jackson, Enrique Chagoya, Don Ed Hardy, Scott Teplin, Alex Kvaes, Jenny Schmid, Daniel Guzman, Travis Millard and countless others fit the bill for big grins. But I also smile when I see a painting by Francesco Goya or Arshile Gorky or Gustave Courbet or whoever makes magic out of the ether. Feeling a grand connection to something that someone else has made in the privacy of his or her own world makes me smile. Sometimes I outright laugh with joy.

NT. GOOD ADVICE YOU WISH YOU'D BEEN TOLD EARLIER?

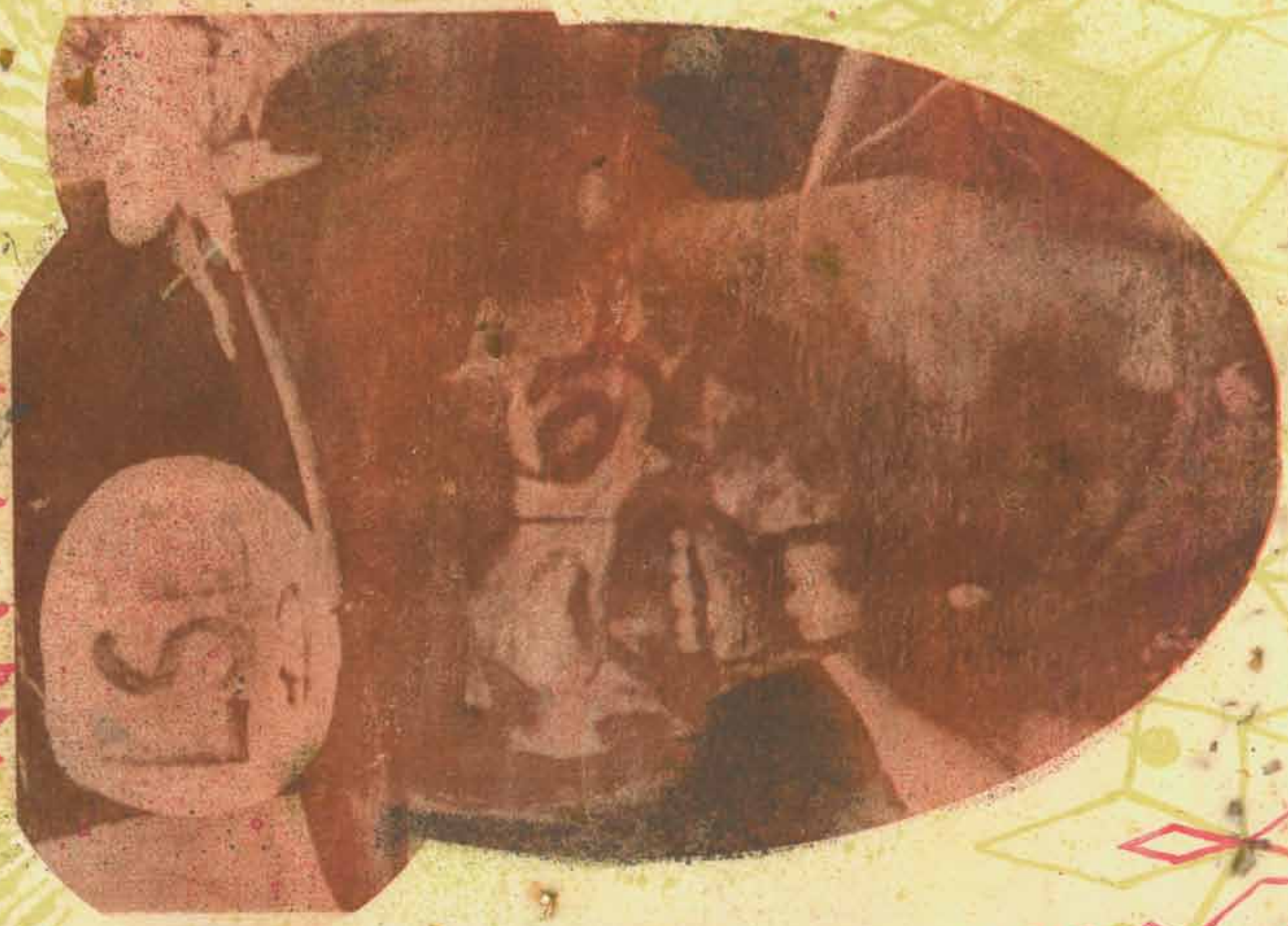
For young artists, I think it is important to find the artists from history and today that truly inspire you, really get to know their work, and lean on those artists when you need them the most. We have to have role models and specific inspirational individuals. Conversely, I think that no artist should model his or her career on another. There is no one way and you have to find your own path.

Another bit of advice - put everything that you have into every show. Don't hold back and don't slack off. Know that no one show is going to make or break your career, so don't put all of your hopes and dreams into one exhibition. Your hopes and your dreams should remain firmly grounded in your studio.

Also, a lesson that took me a while to learn is to never save your good ideas. Proceed forthwith with your best ideas, because more are always on the horizon.

michaelkrueger.us





DROP IT!

SATURDAYS IN JANUARY LOOK A LOT LIKE THIS...

2ND RAVE AGAINST RACISM BREAKS BEATS ELECTRONICA

9TH VIBRATIONS SOUL REGGAE FUNK HIPHOP JUNGLE

16TH DEATH BY SHOES POST PUNK ALT. NOISE

23RD WILDSTYLES RAVE TECHNO HOUSE HIPHOP

30TH GARTAGE REGGAE SOUL HIPHOP WHATEVER

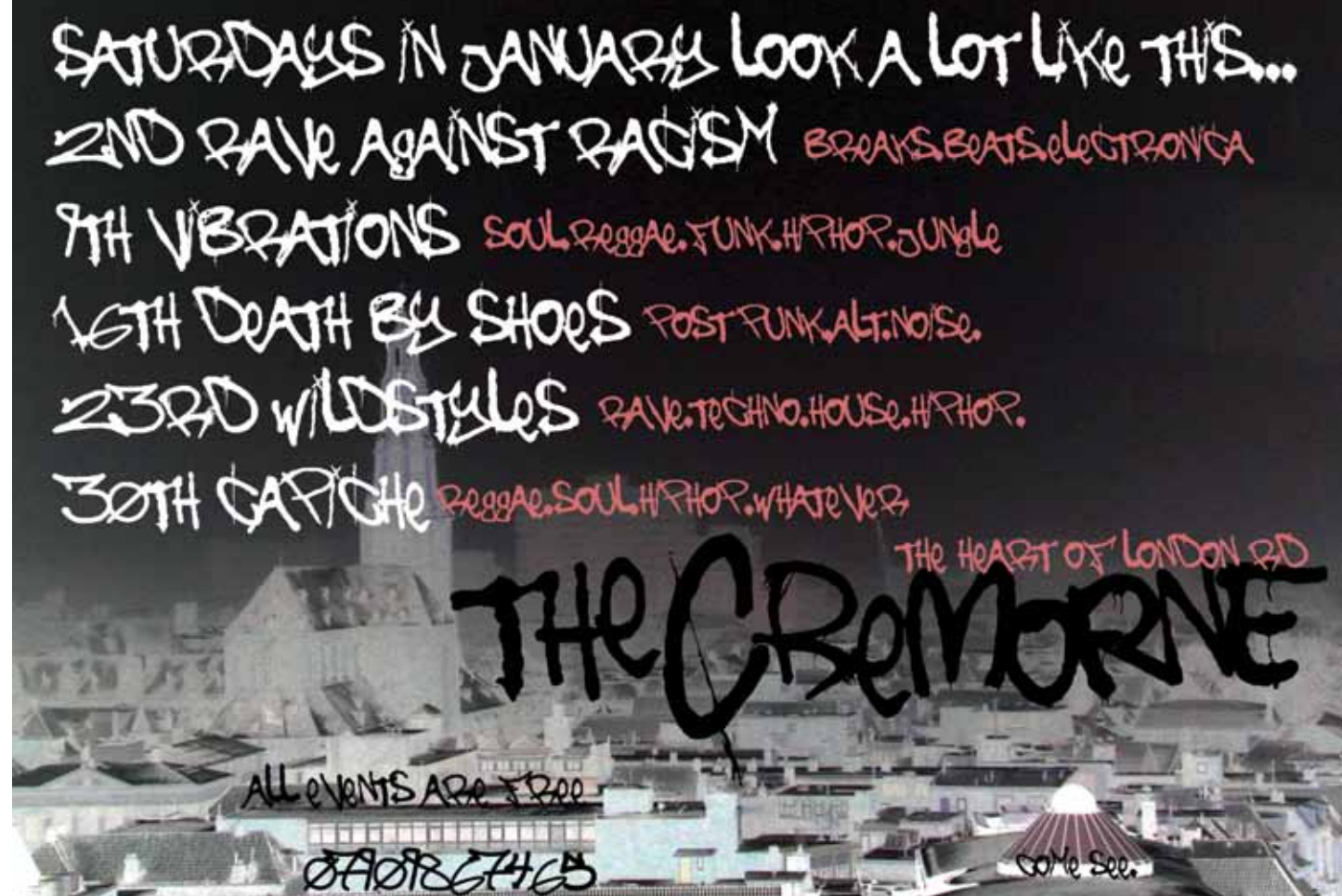
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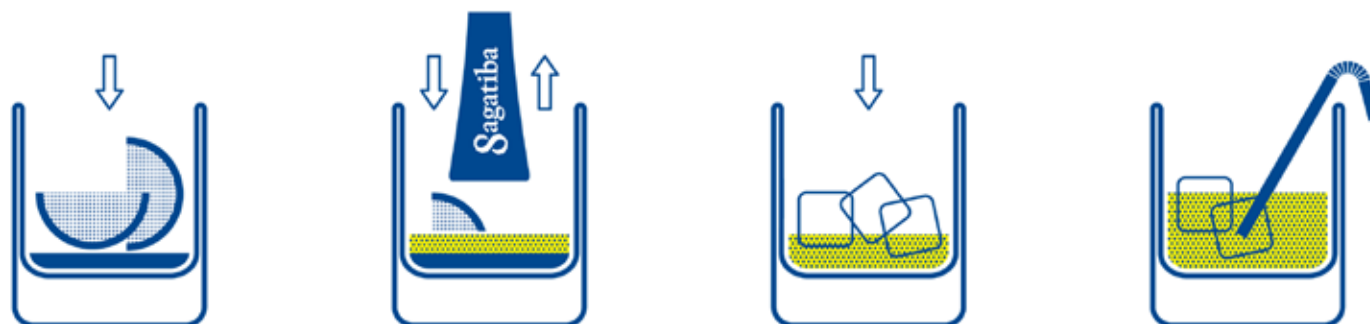
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PEACE IN THE PARK.

THE PEACE IN THE PARK FESTIVAL PROMOTES PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING BY BRINGING TOGETHER COMMUNITIES THROUGH ARTISTIC, MUSICAL AND VOCAL EXPRESSION. PEACE IN THE PARK IS ORGANISED BY A GROUP OF ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, STUDENTS, EVENTS ORGANISERS AND OTHER EVERYDAY SHEFFIELD FOLK, WORKING TOGETHER IN A NOT-FOR-PROFIT COLLECTIVE.

Last year Peace in the Park returned for the second year to the Ponderosa, where despite the unkind weather, the festival maintained the great atmosphere it is famous for and raised £2000 for Village Aid and Nomad.

The 2010 festival is set to go ahead on Saturday 12th June at the Ponderosa and will be the seventh Peace in the Park, which each year collects money for nominated good causes. The whole thing is funded by money raised in advance, so look out for these fundraisers to help make the festival happen, and have a good old knees up too!

If it sounds like something you want to be a part of then get involved!

FUNDRAISING.

PitP wouldn't happen without the enormous fundraising effort of Sheffield's creative and voluntary communities. This is what keeps our festival fresh, independent and generally brilliant! We need to raise between £8k and 10k to make PitP happen – so get those thinking caps on, find amazing ways to make a bob or two and let us know. We're waiting to hear from you... contact@peaceinthepark.org.uk.

STEWARDEDING.

If you would like to get involved with the stewarding/volunteering, please don't hesitate to contact Marc on stewards@peaceinthepark.org.uk.

KID'S ACTIVITIES.

At PitP we plan to have a variety of fun activities for families and children on the day. If you would like to know more, please contact kids@peaceinthepark.org.uk.

Do you know any entertainers or dance groups etc. that would like to show off their skills in public? There is space for lots of involvement, so email kids@peaceinthepark.org.uk.

MUSIC.

Our thanks to all of the many musicians and bands who applied to perform in 2009. Details of how to apply for 2010 will be announced as soon as they become available.

STALLS.

Please contact stalls@peaceinthepark.org.uk for a form or if you have any questions.

DECORATIONS.

Thanks to the people from Art in the Park for organising the festival's decor in 2009. If you want to help decorate the festival in 2010 please get in touch with us at contact@peaceinthepark.org.uk

Looking forward to seeing y'all there, either at the fundraisers or on the big day (or both!)

Peace in the Park

Xxx

web.peaceinthepark.org.uk



BATTLES / FLYING LOTUS.

7TH DECEMBER.
MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2.

REVIEWER - SAM WALBY.

WARP RECORDS SEEMS AS GOOD A REASON AS ANY TO
CROSS THE PENNINES.

First up on this line up is US duo and newest Warp signing Nice Nice, who perform a set that combines live drums with effects-laden electronics. Though I don't catch the whole thing, their songs seem to unfold with a frustrating, tedious inevitability, quite often jarring as the drummer switches from his kit to an electronic pad next to him. Closer 'One Hit' sounds like the final bars of a song that never really got started, looped over and over in a raw, painful way. Others tracks meld world music influences and indie sensibilities in a similar way to bands like Yeasayer, but are for the most part too ramshackle to fully appreciate. This is only in part down to bad sound engineering.

Flying Lotus doesn't come to these parts very often, so it's advisable to catch him when he does. This being my first time in front of the LA producer/DJ extraordinaire, I am impressed with the variety and number of tunes he fits into 45 minutes. Tracks like 'GNG BNG' and 'RobertaFlack' from Los Angeles seem to interest people most, but we are also treated to mixes of 'Massage Situation' and 'Tea Leaf Dancers' from Reset EP, as well as '1983' from his Plug Research release of the same name. He might not be the best at mixing, but he knows how to look busy on stage and puts the cardigan-wearing audience at ease with his friendly charisma and a bottle of vodka he passes round the front. You can even see a few Nathan Barley haircuts shaking to the beat towards the end, which sees FlyLo shelve his hip hop sentiments for five minutes of techno and a brief-but-glorious diversion into jungle.

It's been two and a half years since Battles released the bedwettingly-stupendous *Mirrored*, and its eagerly anticipated follow-up is on its way early this year. Tonight they treat us to some of this new (and, dare I say it, weirder) material, mixed in with old favourites. Introducing a new one, vocalist/guitarist/keyboardist Tyondai says 'this is our hippy song'. I still can't work out what he meant.

The majority of the set was marred by giggling problems: 1.) the sound wasn't right, to the extent that the band were briefly lost mid-song 2.) the kick drum nearly fell off the stage 3.) a random audience member jumped onto the drum kit during a quiet bit and managed to play a feeble beat before a stage manager threw her off. Things like this are frustrating because they are organisational, not musical. Despite a slightly lacklustre rendition of 'Atlas', Battles were not far off being as good as they have been the other times I've seen them live, which begs the question: why the Manchester Academy?



MAJOR LAZER SOUNDSYSTEM.

1ST DECEMBER.
THE TUESDAY CLUB, SHEF UNI.

REVIEWER - ALEX TURNER.

RETURNING TO THE TUESDAY CLUB AFTER A LENGTHY
ABSENCE IS MUCH LIKE SLIPPING INTO A WELL-LOVED YET
UNSAVOURY PAIR OF TRAINERS. THE STUDENT UNION
TOILETS' UNIQUE TANG GREET'S YOUR NOSTRILS, THE
DRINKS OFFERS SEEM ALMOST FAMILIAR ENOUGH TO BRING
ON A REFLEX HEADACHE, AND THE CROWD IS THE SAME
COMFORTING MIX OF STUDES (OBVIOUSLY), SCENESTERS
AND SCALLIES.

Now past its 11th birthday, the night has diversified from its calling-card DnB plus hip-hop (and lately, dubstep) template. Vibrant UK and global bass scenes have enabled genres such as fidget, purple wow and UK funky to be gathered under its hat during 2009. So it seems appropriate that the final weeks of term hove into view in the company of Diplo's Mad Decent crew, pushers of every conceivable sound that causes kids to rave with a vengeance.

Sadly a gridlocked cloaks queue banjaxes any chance of catching TTC resident Stoaty's apparently sweet early-doors set. Instead it's Mad Decent henchman Mumdance warming the floor when entry is finally gained shortly after midnight. His rugged selection ratchets things up steadily as the witching hour progresses, the comedically angry grime of Tempa T's "Next Hype" rubbing shoulders with established bombs such as Joker & Ginz's "Purple City".

But it's Major Lazer that the masses have turned out for tonight. Diplo and Switch's multi-coloured, sugar-coated, dancehall-iced gateau of a project has spawned the pure-party album of the year, slaying dances worldwide and sending its producers' already sky-high profiles ever onwards and upwards. With rumours circulating that the famously-hedonistic Switch has been sidelined due to caning excess, Diplo steps up to his laptop alone to the strains of Sticky & Miss Dynamite's "Booo!". Much like his bootleg LP's for MIA and Santogold, the live Major Lazer Soundsystem sees album elements dropped into a thick stew of booty-ready flavours tailor-made for this floor. Populist anthems like Caspa & Rusko's "Cockney Thug" and Benga & Coki's "Night" reach far beyond the music geeks in the house, with studio vocalists replaced by the hyperactive Skerritt Bwoy and assorted other MCs and dancers sporting a glittering array of spandex stretched across their buff, sweating frames.

Never one to shy away from big tunes, it's unfortunate that Diplo's crowd-pleasing approach also feeds the night's biggest drawback. At times the vibe is more Oasis gig than club night as beery jocks shove the crowd, levelling smaller punters. Booze is chucked everywhere, and a fight gets underway between two man-mountain rugger types before an even more sizeable dude intervenes. Luckily tempo changes ease the crush from time to time, the MCs bellowing "do you like reggae?" to general delight as Diplo drops some of the album's more laidback moments.

Bad vibes are mostly banished by the time "Pon De Floor" signals a mass onstage dance-off between audience members, and following a double-paced rinse through "Hold The Line" things gradually thin out leaving a (happy) hardcore to soak up the last half hour. Looks like Tuesday night business as usual for a good while yet.

QUANTIC.

10TH DECEMBER.
THE FORUM, DEVONSHIRE ST.

REVIEWER - BEN DOREY.

FOR THE FORUM TO BE RAMMED TO THE RAFTERS IS A RARE
THING ON A WEEKNIGHT, BUT WHEN YOU BOOK ONE OF
BRITAIN'S MOST SOUGHT-AFTER DJ'S AND THEN PUT HIM ON
FOR FREE, YOU'RE GUARANTEED TO DRAW A CROWD.

Somehow one of those elusive atmospheres had developed wherein nearly everyone was smiling, even those at the back of a four-deep crush for the bar. But then again, putting smiles on faces is essentially what Quantic does best. Leapfrogging across obscure genres without any pretension, essentially what the man does is to play to the party, a refreshing change in a profession largely dominated by egomaniacs trying to plug a sound. And with a record bag the size of his (actually that should be record bags), there's always a tricky tune up his sleeve.

So, to the music. Quantic is well known for not being boxed into any genre and his set tonight was no different. He skims the dancefloor cream off the top of myriad styles of music, managing to create the energy of a techno DJ whilst maintaining constant interest through rapid changes in direction. During his time this evening we were treated to soul, motown, rhumba, samba, funk, house, drum and bass, roots, reggae, dubstep...this is not a comprehensive list, and I would struggle to place some of the more esoteric selections into defined genres, but hopefully it gives those of you who missed out an insight into just how adeptly the man moves through music.

What is most noticeable listening to Quantic play out at the moment is the influence his recent move to Columbia has had on his music. The man already had a firm grasp of North American music, and now it seems his ears have turned to the southern neighbours. A significant proportion of the music he played tonight was completely fresh to my ears, and I'd have thought to most peoples, simply because there's clearly a huge amount of quality music being made in Latin America that we don't know about. With dance music in the west currently going through another one of its infatuations with latin rhythms, it was nice to hear some music from the roots of the sound without any of the gimmickry and overproduced elements that have damaged genres such as baile funk. Fantastic, fresh and unavoidably danceable music that is unfamiliar but never unfriendly. Winner.

Following up were Sheffield's troublesome twosome Swank And Jams, who kept the energy high right up until the end with their choice, genre-spanning selection of eclectic vinyl gems. These boys have been on the circuit for a while now and should come with a warning - guaranteed to smash up any dancefloor. Now Then even managed to get on the mike and ask the crowd whether they'd enjoyed it. The resounding 'yes' means this month I don't have to hypothesise about what the crowd thought - we know they loved it, and we did too.

YEAH YEAH YEAHS.

7TH DECEMBER.
SHEFFIELD ACADEMY.

REVIEWER - ED WOOLLEY.

IT'S SIX YEARS SINCE THE YEAH YEAH YEAHS DEBUT LP
FEVER TO TELL BROUGHT THEM TO INTERNATIONAL
ATTENTION. INITIAL REACTIONS WERE DIVIDED - SOME
LAUDED THEM AS A VITAL, NEW-WAVE INFLUENCED SHOT
IN THE ARM TO A FALTERING ROCK SCENE, OTHERS DERIDED
THEM AS SUPERFICIAL SCENESTERS, LIKELY TO DISAPPEAR
AS FASHIONS CHANGED. THREE ALBUMS ON, THIS YEAR'S
IT'S BLITZ BRINGS THEIR ELECTRONICA AND DANCE
INFLUENCES TO THE FORE MORE THAN EVER BEFORE. AND
IT'S THIS NEW ALBUM THAT BRINGS THEM TO THE
SHEFFIELD ACADEMY TONIGHT.

Like the YYY's, you're immediately drawn to support band Duchess Says front women. Imagine Alice (in Wonderland) having been fed peyote and then jabbed by invisible sticks. Unfortunately, the excitement of the music doesn't match up to the stage antics - their mixture of electro and rock sounding hackneyed and self conscious.

The audience are getting a little restless by the time YYY's appear. But at the sight of figures emerging from backstage everyone scans for Karen O, whose carries a reputation for eccentric stage attire. She doesn't disappoint, with an outfit which looks comprised of the blended contents of a clown's sock drawer. This is, however, a perfect garb for her energetic performance, with tassels flying all over as she kicks her legs akimbo. The audience respond malleably as they mirror her onstage pogoing. Her quirky and vivacious character provides an interesting twist to the traditional, and normally male-dominated, archetype of a rock and roll front-man.

The answer to their initial detractors comes through set songs like 'Gold Lion', 'Date with the night' and 'Skeletons' where they show an ability to sculpt great tunes from sparse instrumentation, enjoyed here in all its ragged glory. This is a band which should be celebrated for the sheer child-like joy of their rock and roll and, on this showing, they don't want the party to end yet.

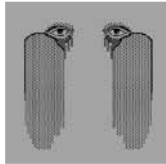


REVIEWS.

BEAR IN HEAVEN. SOULS OF MISCHIEF.

PORTISHEAD. ÓLAFUR ARNALDS.

BEAR IN HEAVEN. BEAST REST FORTH MOUTH.



HOMETAPES.

REVIEWER - ANTHONY PEARCE.

BROOKLYN-BASED BEAR IN HEAVEN’S SOPHOMORE ALBUM, BEAST REST FORTH MOUTH, HAS A PECULIAR APPEAL. IT’S GOOD. THAT MUCH ALONE IS OBVIOUS. BUT IT IS THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE GRUMBLING, TEXTURAL BEDS OF MUSIC AND THE LAYER OF POP-VOCALS – THAT BORROW FROM THE ANIMAL COLLECTIVE AND GRIZZLY BEAR NORTH AMERICAN SCHOOL OF HARMONISATION – THAT MAKES IT BOTH PECULIAR AND FASCINATING. ALIENATED, THE MUSIC CAN BE MOODY AND COMPLEX; MARRIED, THE SONGS ARE SHORT, INFECTIOUS AND POPPY BLASTS OF INDIE.

The album has drawn comparisons with Can’s 1971 effort, the masterful *Tago Mago*. It was actually Bear in Heaven’s debut, *Red Bloom of the Boom*, that drew more heavily from Can musically. However, the comparison suffices to explain Bear in Heaven’s ability to be both poppy and experimental. Damo Suzuki’s vocals allowed Can to be instantly recognisable, catchy, but at the same time progressive – setting them apart from the likes of Neu! and Cluster. Animal Collective’s *Merriweather Post Pavilion* similarly achieved such a feat – drawing plaudits from far and wide. The Brooklyn-based four-piece deserve nothing short of the same.

The said matrimony of vocals and music becomes more apparent with each listen. The subtle, static-laden ‘Dust Cloud’ echoes, reverbs and bubbles, albeit towards a gentle quiet. A glorious nod towards dream-pop, at nearly six minutes it’s the album’s longest offering. At only 41 minutes the album itself very short. The melodies and lyrics brood, but the album develops, thickening fast enough to be a pop record. It’s an experimental sound, but its briefness stifles over-indulgence, as it swings from krautrock to shoegaze to sytnh-pop without leaving you feeling short-changed.

‘You Do You’ is as infectious as TV on the Radio at their best, whilst ‘Deafening Love’ – ostensibly abrasive – manages somehow to be as gentle as it is engaging. Jon Philpot’s vocals are not traditionally strong. Yet, over these beds, they float and settle almost gingerly on top. It’s not a vocal display many would compare with the brilliant Thom Yorke, but in Philpot’s ability to use his voice as an instrument, the comparison is not lost.

The first single, ‘Lovesick Teenagers’, is an album highlight and the most traditional offering in terms of its structure and its vocals. The luxuriant synth-beat and catchy chorus feel destined for indie dance floor glory. Yet, somehow I can’t see it happening. The album has been met with critical acclaim in some spheres, but has been largely ignored in others.

As the album builds, Philpot’s vocals steadily slide into the undecipherable, becoming the said instrument. As one track seamlessly merges into the next, *Beast Rest Forth Mouth* is rarely silent. But, don’t get me wrong, it’s rarely loud either. Its experimentation is perfectly blended with pop-melodies, producing one of 2009’s most accomplished albums.

SOULS OF MISCHIEF. MONTEZUMA’S REVENGE.



CLEAR LABEL RECORDS.

REVIEWER - MARC JEROME.

MONTEZUMA’S REVENGE IS THE FIRST ALBUM FROM CALIFORNIA QUARTET SOULS OF MISCHIEF SINCE THEY DROPPED TRILOGY: CONFLICT, CLIMAX, RESOLUTION IN 2003. THIS TIME AROUND, EMCEES A-PLUS, OPIO, PHESTO & TAJAI HAVE BEEN JOINED BEHIND THE DESK BY PRODUCER EXTRAORDINAIRE PRINCE PAUL AND HIEROGLYPHICS IN-HOUSE PRODUCER DOMINO.

The underlying drive of this record is to keep things suitably old-school, albeit whilst still maintaining SoM’s innovative yet laid-back style. Several times we are reminded of the importance of the old-school feel, for example in the ‘Mr Freeman’ skit, in which a knock-off Morgan Freeman attempts to dissuade Tajai from kicking it in an old-school style, only to be rebuffed by the mischievous emcee: “I’m trying to represent the essence man I mean you know, bring it back, you know. Somebody gotta represent for these youngsters man, they gotta understand.”

Although their motives are without question, the execution is somewhat suspect. There are a handful of boom-bap bangers on this record, but also a few tunes that fall sadly short of expectation. At their best SoM are still capable of crafting an effortlessly cool ebb and flow of beats and rhymes. ‘Postal’ showcases the group’s ability to work within a melody, spitting over orchestral strings and a recurrent hook, whilst ‘Woni’ exhibits an unstoppable rolling bass that punches through the cypher.

On the other side of the coin are tracks such as ‘Lickity Split’, with its refrain of “Man, I’m sick of this bitch. Not you - this particular bitch. I’m sick of this bitch. I’m ‘bout to get rid of her like lickity split.” Poor half-rhymes aside, the fault of this record is also its greatest asset; a fervour for the old-school. On the tracks where SoM are at their best, they exude the old-school spirit of passion and creative flair, but when they fail the old-school becomes simply a worn-out aesthetic that lacks the vibrancy to get your toes tapping. The difference is one of construction; some songs have been made to sound like they were written back-in-the-day, whilst others truly evoke the sense of collaborative innovation that has made the old-school tunes so dear.

This record is probably one for the fans. This is no insult because the quartet’s solo work and involvement with the Hieroglyphics crew suggest that there does exist a body of fans who will welcome any new material from these West coast stalwarts. 93 ‘Til Infinity? They sure weren’t kidding.

PORTISHEAD. CHASE THE TEAR.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

REVIEWER - LAMBERTUS PRENT.

‘CHASE THE TEAR’ IS THE FIRST NEW MATERIAL FROM GLOOMY SOUTH-WESTERNERS PORTISHEAD SINCE COMEBACK LP THIRD LAST YEAR AND IS RELEASED AS A BENEFIT FOR AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AHEAD OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY.

Where Third flirted with krautrock, this track jumps straight into bed with it without a second thought. Combining the Portishead of old with influences like this might seem a bit incongruent - and on first listen it is - but it only takes a few minutes for the angular catchiness of this track to start seeping into your brain. Though everything has changed around her, Beth Gibbons remains the same - all guttural moans, emotive wails and lyrics about “open doorways full of shame”. The warm analogue sound of the mix is offset beautifully with a cold and isolated post punk guitar that sounds like it was recorded in a separate building to the rest of the song, while the strange chord changes and melodic hook of the chorus provide decent mileage. The new sound of Portishead? Or just the sound of Geoff Barrow’s new krautrock side project, Beak>? Who knows.

‘Chase the Tear’ is available for exclusive download from 7digital.com. All proceeds go to Amnesty International.



ÓLAFUR ARNALDS. DYAD 1909.



ERASED TAPES.

REVIEWER - BEN DOREY.

ÓLAFUR ARNALDS IS A STUNNING YOUNG COMPOSER AND PRODUCER FROM ICELAND, ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING WORKING IN THE MURKY AREA BETWEEN CLASSICAL AND ELECTRONIC MUSIC. HIS LATEST RELEASE, DYAD 1909, WAS WRITTEN TO ACCOMPANY THE THEATRE PRODUCTION OF THE SAME NAME IN LONDON, BASED AROUND SHACKLETON’S FAILED SOUTH POLE VOYAGE.

The opening and closing tracks are essentially two parts of one composition which bookend the rest of the material. Arnald’s creates an eerie sense of voyaging seabound into the unknown with electronic ambience, glitch and samples of ice cracking, before unleashing an unnerving set of delayed, overlapping synth textures that elicit complex emotions whilst remaining remarkably simple. The second track ‘Lokaou augunum (Dyad 1909 version)’ is a re-recording of an old piece but you can’t begrudge the young man for reusing it in a new context. The music is chillingly beautiful - a piano emerges from the depths of a sea of toned glitches with lines not dissimilar from the likes of Eric Satie, positioned far in the distant realms of the mix so as to sound hauntingly hollow, before warm and grainy strings enter courtesy of the quartet Ólafur tours with.

The record then enters more unexpected territory, with a neo-baroque viola line playing arpeggios over harsh and distorted electronic beats, and repeating layers entering gradually and building up a complex tonal landscape. The effect is something somewhere between Laurent Garnier and Phillip Glass, but it’s the string players who really make this piece, missing notes by fractions of a tone to add incredible tension to the body of the music. The next song is another re-recording of an old song, and again it is driven by unnervingly, Satiesque piano. What is so remarkable here (apart from the by-now expected incredible composition) is the way Arnalds records the piano - this time it is at the forefront of the mix and captured purposefully in a way that enables the listener to hear the clunks and clicks of the piano’s mechanism, which are then allowed to peak at points so the sound distorts. The man clearly has a particular mastery of acoustics.

The next track, ‘3326’, is a piece solely for the string quartet and they really get to stretch their muscles here. Every line heaves with a vibrato sustain that gradually increases in volume, giving the impression that this rapid piece is threatening to trip over itself the whole way through. The first part again has a baroque feel to it, with a very firm contrapuntal structure that allows us to almost settle into the music. Ólafur always unseats us, though, and just the faintest hints of discordance around the edges of the music’s tight structure ensure you can never feel too comfortable in your immersion. Then the penultimate track actually knocks you out of your chair as the brooding arpeggios of the last piece move to piano and are accompanied by beats that wouldn’t be out of place on a Venetian Snares record. The final track provides closure with its heart-wrenching variations on the theme of the opener.

A fantastic and terrifying joy for your ears to behold.



SCUBA.

DUBSTEP PRODUCER AND HOTFLUSH LABEL HEAD HAS WORDS.

INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY.

DOES BEING AN INDEPENDENT ARTIST ALWAYS EQUAL CREATIVE AND PERSONAL FREEDOM?

I wouldn't say it equals personal freedom. You can end up being a prisoner of work – it never ends. At the moment I'm in the middle of a ten week period where I will have two days off. It's true that when it's for yourself work doesn't feel anywhere near as hard as when it's for someone else, but it can still take over your life. Creatively, I can't imagine working any other way. There's no way I could sign to a big label and be told what tracks were going on my album or whatever. I have a real issue with being told what to do, and if that got into music then there would be big problems.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH THE CONSTRUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS IN YOUR TRACKS? WHICH ELEMENTS USUALLY COME FIRST?

It varies quite a lot. Sometimes I'll sit down at the keyboard, hit record and just improvise for a while. Other times I'll start with some drums and make a beat and build it from there. Sometimes it can be a little sound effect or piece of noise that I'm playing around with and goes somewhere. There's no set way of doing it, and I actively avoid falling into patterns with writing. It's important to try and keep it as spontaneous as possible.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE ILLEGAL DOWNLOADING OF MUSIC?

Legal downloading, for example of podcasts, helps electronic music. Illegal downloading doesn't help anything. We live in a weird age where governments have decided to take a completely laissez faire attitude to what is fast becoming the main commercial marketplace. I can't see it lasting that much longer though.

WHY DID YOU RELEASE YOUR LAST 10" ON [NAKEDLUNCH]?

I liked the tracks, but they weren't going to fit in to the Hotflush schedule so I gave them to a different label I liked instead.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR NEXT RELEASE AND WHEN IT WILL SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY.

There's a mix CD coming on Berghain's Ostgut Ton label, which ties in with the party we do there which is called SUB:STANCE. That's coming out on January 25. And then a couple of months later my second album will be coming out on Hotflush. I can't say much about it other than it's a lot more varied than the first one.

WHICH ARTISTS/ALBUMS HAVE MOST INSPIRED YOUR CURRENT SOUND?

DBridge and Instra:mental, Marcel Dettmann, Roska and Fleetwood Mac.

YOU'VE SPOKEN ABOUT CRISES OF CONFIDENCE IN PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS. HOW DO YOU FEEL THE NEW ALBUM IS SHAPING UP? HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE IT TO A MUTUAL ANTIPATHY?

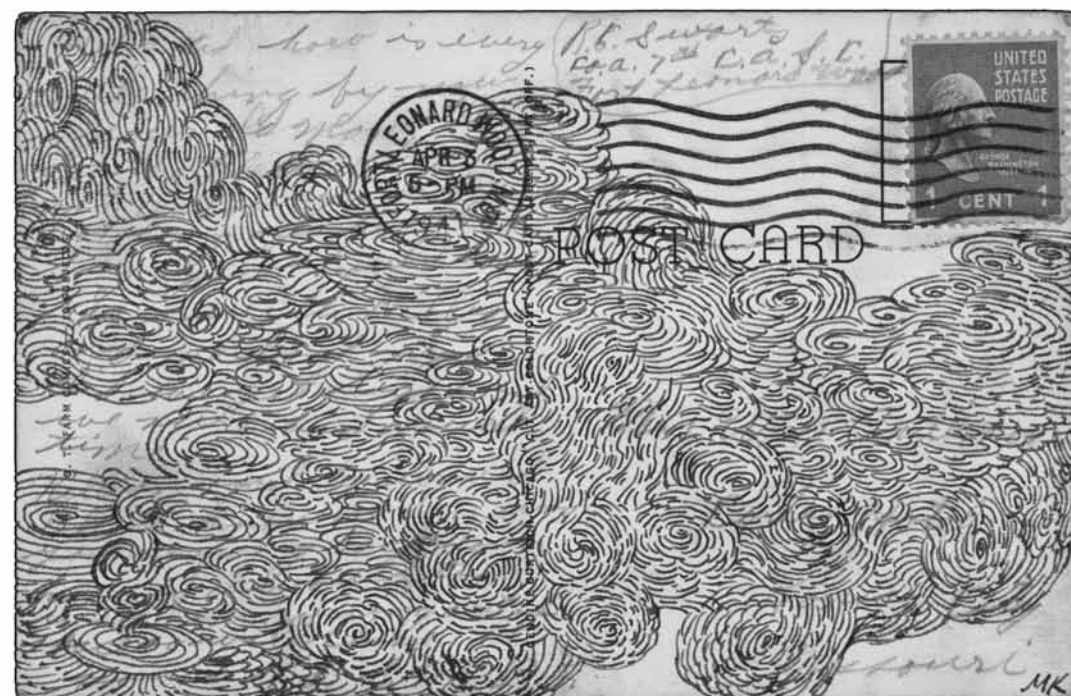
I've been trying to write it since January and it's still not done, so take what you will from that.

DO YOU THINK LIVING IN BERLIN HAS AFFECTED THE SOUND OF THE ALBUM MUCH? HAVE YOU BEEN GOING ON MANY NIGHTS OUT THERE?

I don't go out that much when I'm not playing to be honest, but when I do it's usually to Panorama Bar. But I wouldn't say that influences me much musically, not for Scuba stuff anyway. I've been working on my SCB project recently, which is more influenced by that whole thing. The first release should be out in February. In the last year or so I've been listening to more UK music than anything else though, and that's more where the Scuba album is coming from.

WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS FOR HOTFLUSH?

To release more albums. The demise of the album as a format depresses me and I intend to fight it. There's nothing wrong with people making playlists, but if you really like an artist then you should pay them your full attention at least some of the time. With the long players we release in 2010 there will be some little incentives to buy and listen to stuff as a whole rather than just picking out a couple of tunes you like.



PAUL ROSE IS BETTER KNOWN AS SCUBA, LEFTFIELD DUBSTEP PRODUCER AND HEAD OF THE FORMATIVE HOTFLUSH RECORDINGS IMPRINT, WHICH HAS RELEASED MUSIC BY THE LIKES OF DJ DISTANCE, SPECTR, BOXCUTTER, VACCINE, JAZZSTEPPA, JOY ORBISON AND MOUNT KIMBIE SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2003. FROM THE MOMENT I HEARD HIS DEBUT ALBUM, A MUTUAL ANTIPATHY, MORE SPECIFICALLY THE TRACK 'TELL HER', I KNEW SCUBA WAS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH, AND AN ORIGINAL ONE AT THAT. HE IS ADEPT AT PRODUCING MUSIC THAT OCCUPIES A UNIQUE SONIC AND ATMOSPHERIC SPACE WHILE PRESERVING THE DEPTH AND SYNCOPATED RHYTHMS DUBSTEP IS SO KNOWN FOR. NOW RESIDING IN BERLIN AND PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HIS SECOND LP, MR ROSE CHATTED TO US ABOUT THE GENRE IN 2010 AND THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF HOTFLUSH.

WHAT GOT YOU STARTED ON PRODUCTION? WHAT MUSIC WERE YOU RAVING TO IN YOUR EARLY YOUTH?

I played in bands when I was younger, but I've always been more interested in writing music than playing it. So I started messing around on the computer when I was about 16 and it gradually went from there. The first electronic stuff I got into was techno – Colin Dale and Colin Faver on Kiss in the mid 90s. I used to tape the shows and listen to them on the way to school. After that I got into jungle and then garage, which slowly turned into dubstep.

HOW DID HOTFLUSH RECORDINGS GET STARTED? WERE THERE ANY ARTISTS IN PARTICULAR THAT DREW YOU TO START PROMOTING OTHER PEOPLE'S MUSIC?

The label was originally intended to be quite wide ranging, mainly because what I was doing as a DJ at that time was pretty diverse. I was playing lots of different stuff, but always around the garage tempo and style. Dubstep was just beginning to become a recognised genre and the label kind of fell into it accidentally. I was playing on the same pirate station as people like Hatcha and Kode 9 and it just slowly became a movement. There were a lot of new producers making really unique stuff, like Toasty, Search & Destroy, Distance etc, and trying to give it a platform was the obvious thing to do.

WITH TECHNO, ELECTRO, 2STEP AND DNB INFLUENCES INFILTRATING THE GENRE FROM ALL SIDES, THE TERM 'DUBSTEP' SEEMS TO GET BROADER AND LESS DESCRIPTIVE WITH EVERY PASSING MINUTE. WOULD YOU EVEN CLASSIFY YOURSELF AS A DUBSTEP PRODUCER?

I still think of what I do as dubstep, even though I guess a lot of people probably don't. What was good about dubstep in the first place was how open it was, and one of the inevitable results of it becoming popular is that you lose some of that. People have an idea of how they think it sounds and if something doesn't fit that then it's apparently not dubstep. I do find it quite funny that people who have been listening to the music for a year or so think they can tell me what my music is, but there's no avoiding it I suppose.

JOY ORBISON'S 'HYPH MNGO' ON HOTFLUSH IS GETTING A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF AIR TIME ON RADIO SHOWS AND IN DJ SETS EVERYWHERE. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS SPECIAL ABOUT HIM AND THIS TUNE SPECIFICALLY?

It's obviously a great record, but you can never really tell if something is going to catch on in a really big way. The whole thing has really confirmed to me what I suspected about radio DJs. I heard someone playing it on Radio 1 and they said: "I don't really know why I'm playing this, but everyone else is so I'm going to too." They actually said that! But there's been other tunes that have blown up that haven't been half as good as 'Hyph Mngo' so I can't really complain, and the other stuff he's done really backs the whole thing up so it's great that he's getting all the attention.

ANY HOT TIPS FOR 2010?

Mount Kimbie.



SOUL JAZZ RECORDS.

LONDON-BASED LABEL SPECIALISING IN DUB, REGGAE, JAZZ AND WORLD MUSIC.

IMOGEN DECORDOVA.

I SHOULD MENTION (OUT OF FEAR OF SOUNDING LIKE A PR CREEP) THAT I DON'T WORK FOR SOUL JAZZ RECORDS OR KNOW ANYONE AFFILIATED WITH IT, BUT AFTER YEARS OF SEEING THEIR RIDICULOUSLY COOL ADVERTS STARING BACK AT ME FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE WIRE MAGAZINE I WAS LURED INTO THE SOUL JAZZ JUNGLE AND I'M HAVING A REALLY HARD TIME MAKING MY WAY OUT.

One of the UK's best independent record labels releasing one spell-binding compilation after another, Soul Jazz was founded in the early 90s. The London-based label specialises in all manner of non-mainstream musical delights, with its main focus on principally black music and compilations featuring some of the most radical artists and musicians, including Sun Ra, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Alice Coltrane and Os Mutantes. Amongst their incredible catalogue of innovative black music, Soul Jazz also delves into the world of psychedelic, DIY post punk, no wave and global sounds with its Sounds of the Universe imprint.

But Soul Jazz doesn't just deal in soundwaves. They've got the visual goods to boot, with a whole host of excellent Blaxploitation films and music documentaries such as Les Stances à Sophie, Dub Echoes and Studio One Story.

Soul Jazz recently reignited (and sadly snuffed them out again) the flames of their infamous 100% Dynamite monthly Sunday event in London's Brick Lane, featuring Soul Jazz soundsystem and hosting a huge roster of talent like Warrior Queen. They played dancehall, dubstep, funk and soul and hosted a film screening of Franco Rosso's Babylon, a poignant look at working class black youths living in South London in the early 1980s accompanied by the sounds of I-Roy and Aswad.

With the likes of global music conduit Gilles Peterson regularly putting together compilations for the label, it is the first port of call for anyone interested in delving into the wonderful world of... Haitian voodoo tribal drumming, say, or perhaps the polyphonic voices of Georgia. Whatever the niche, chances are Soul Jazz have covered it. But before anyone dare say it, Soul Jazz don't deal in novelty exploitative new age rubbish. Care and attention is paid to each release, usually coming with some artwork integral to the record itself and a nifty booklet chronicling the development and history of the genre or scene featured.

souljazzrecords.co.uk

HERE'S A SMALL SNIPPET OF SOME RECOMMENDED SOUL JAZZ RELEASES.



NEW THING! DEEP JAZZ IN THE USA.

As usual, Soul Jazz offer another microcosm of the cream of the civil rights jazz crop, in a similar vein to Universal Sounds of America but less afro futuristic and more politicised.



CAN YOU DIG IT? THE MUSIC AND POLITICS OF BLACK ACTION FILMS 1968-75.

A recent release putting together some familiar and alien sounds inspired and hired by some of the greatest Blaxploitation films, including Coffy, Foxy Brown and of course, Shaft Goes to Africa.



UNIVERSAL SOUNDS OF AMERICA. UNIVERSAL SOUNDS OF AMERICA.

This is what the future should sound like. 'Thème de Yoyo' is possibly the best track on the album. This release just proves Space is the Place.



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SHEFFIELD, BENEATH THE SURFACE.

THE WORK OF FILMMAKER JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES.

This remains one strange place... When I first arrived in Sheffield over 13 years ago, the ghosts of a not-so-distant industrial past were almost tangible. The city seemed to cling hard to its former national identity, whilst a scent of resentment could be sniffed in most neglected corners. I witnessed how it was being forced into its 'new clothes' by being made more cosmopolitan and increasingly affluent (in every sense of the word). But there's a whole side of it all that I couldn't perceive then – and that is very clear to me now. Yes, this remains one strange place...

What's beneath the surface of things could easily be considered the cornerstone of my entire output as a filmmaker. Behind all facades, traditions, people's personal habits or intentions, a lot more is lurking. Sheffield is a quintessential example of this, providing me with a wonderful template/backdrop to explore and express my vision. There's a gentle sadness counterpointing the robust and aforementioned past. Together with the outstanding surrounding Nature (which is allowed to take over as much as the baffling architecture of recent years), these also have a place in what I've been progressively carving as my body of work.

My very first short film, Imogen Meets The Merchant (2001), was made here and is an exact acknowledgement of these notions. The fragmented narrative in which a young woman is gradually consumed by an urban myth is told against a superimposition of architectural styles. Those were my early steps into an understanding of a place that I could only and irrevocably appreciate from the outside.

It would take approximately four years, punctuated with professional experiences both here and in my native Portugal, before I started producing and shooting my own films. Somehow my work demanded that extra level of control and unmediated artistic expression. And more than a little something must've been right about that decision because, parallel to that, commissioned work started to emerge and it's been generating more and more work in such areas as documentaries, and promotional and music videos.

So, if I retrace my steps back to the first feature-length film of my 'solo' career, I can now very lucidly illustrate an interesting paradox about what it is to truly create art in Sheffield.

It's all about following your own path, being a loner in your own field, doing your very own thing.

Absences of Mind (2005) started a Portuguese language trilogy of films partially shot in Sheffield. In hindsight, it's my love letter to that other city in my life – Lisbon, the one I still call home. And it's true that, whatever the artistic area, the Portuguese do express themselves better when deeply missing or feeling the absence of something or someone. But that and other subsequent films couldn't have been made without the genuine sense of isolation this city has to offer.

The solitude in earnest craftsmanship is also an all-encompassing aspect of living and working in Sheffield. I find it more acutely in my close friends and collaborators in this city, with whom I feel privileged to share time but, in all honesty, it pervades a lot more creative minds across the board.

It's no coincidence that I now edit and regularly write for this section of this most alternative of publications. Now Then is one of the mediums through which individuality and authenticity are given a voice. Somehow, it brings every one of us together and makes sense of a city through its disparate artistic community.

Overall, I've made nine fiction films, ten documentaries and ten music videos - collaborating with such national institutions as the BBC and Anglia News along the way. Whilst some of my earlier work has had its worldwide broadcast rights bought by Sky TV and was pre-selected for the Cannes Film Festival, the projects that ensued have taken me to remote areas of the UK, of Portugal, to Rome and to Barcelona. I've worked with regional charities in Yorkshire – making ethically-minded documentaries that support valuable causes – and with experimental music and drama projects based in New York and Lisbon.

Beyond Sheffield, and in the pipeline, there's the feature-length project called Londoners, which combines my experience with documentaries that promote cultural diversity with the observational takes on the human condition I explore in my fictional work.

There's also the conclusion of the Absences Trilogy and the continuation of the Thalys Trilogy, which was initiated with the erotic, mystery tale Antlers of Reason (2006), and will be followed by Antlers of Reason II: Morning Interim and will conclude with Antlers of Reason III: Nether Edge Temptress. Another Portuguese production, entitled Torpor Revisited will be released on DVD within the next three months and, at the time of this text being sent to print, I'm in pre-production for Running With The Wolves – my official entry to a competition to deliver a music video for the Prodigy.

And way, way beyond all this, there's Beyond Climate Change, an Australian co-production of a documentary which is currently in development and will outline social, historical and scientific aspects never before explored in a film of this kind.



JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES IS A PORTUGUESE FILMMAKER LIVING AND WORKING INDEPENDENTLY IN SHEFFIELD. TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH HIS WORK, YOU CAN VISIT:

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STOLEN WATERS & OTHER ABSENCES (2007).

DIRECTOR - JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES. REVIEWER – ENRIQUE RODRIGUEZ.

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING IS DEFINITELY A TREAT TO WATCH BECAUSE IT OFFERS US EXTRAORDINARY AND AUTHENTIC VISIONS INCORPORATING IRREVERENT STORIES AND OFTEN EXPLICIT YET POETIC SCENES. IT'S CHARACTERISED BY INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITHOUT INDUSTRY CONSTRAINTS AND SEEKING INNOVATIVE WAYS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES. SHEFFIELD IS HOME TO ONE SUCH GIFTED ARTIST; INDEPENDENT PORTUGUESE FILMMAKER JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES, WHO HAS ADOPTED THE CITY AS HIS BASE TO WRITE, PRODUCE AND DIRECT HIS SEVERAL PROJECTS TO DATE.

One of his most recent feature films, Stolen Waters & Other Absences - part of the Absences Trilogy - is a multi-stranded narrative featuring three segments: "The Next Deluge", "Stolen Waters" and "One of Those Mysteries".

Right from the beginning we are indulged with an organic soundtrack that remains tantalising along the dialogue-free narrative, which is, in turn, presented in counterpoint to the lengthy yet compelling story verbally told by actor Luís Correia Carmelo – reprising his role from Absences of Mind (2005).

The scenery of Stolen Waters is amazing, particularly in those events happening in Portugal. We are given a pleasurable spectacle of its hot summer landscapes. Sandy beaches and wide open views of dried prairies in a tranquil day contrast with the murky and claustrophobic living spaces in England. But it is ageless Rome - 'la delicatezza' – with its historic buildings and ancient roads that proves to be the perfect gateway for the exile of the elusive poet.

Along the three segments, water becomes one of the main characters. A running shower caressing the exposed skin of Martina Goodman's Brooke, whose love for music takes her to experience unique emotions... A half full bath embracing fragile Ivania Elena's Madeleine, whose road accident sets her to find her other half and her true self... And the colossal ocean, which gives us the sculptural Ligia, played by Sara Aleixo. Rain, a secluded brook, a dry river bed and a bottle of mineral water add to the fluid and mesmerising narrative in equal measure.

Stolen Waters & Other Absences is an outstanding effort by prolific director João Paulo Simões. The open ending cleverly suggests that the poetry will unravel further and almost surely in another dazzling piece of work.

The Special Edition DVD of Stolen Waters & Other Absences is available to buy from <http://capturafilmes.blogspot.com/>

TORPOR (2003). DIRECTOR - JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES. REVIEWER - OWEN COGAN.

TORPOR IS DIRECTOR JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES' THIRD FILM. IT IS AN UNSETTLING PIECE WHICH PLOTS THE FEMALE PROTAGONIST'S JOURNEY THROUGH A PERIOD OF DEBILITATING DEPRESSION/PSYCHOSIS/NEUROSIS. IT IS A FILM ABOUT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR OF RESISTING THE WORLD, ABOUT ERECTING PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENCES AND HIDING FROM REALITY.

The world presented to the viewer is that inhabited by the woman in crisis. The director expresses the sickly perspective of the character in his composition - the ceaseless use of the darkest of black and white, combined with the fact that nearly all of the film's scenes are shot in claustrophobic situations, serves to suffocate the viewer. We are made to inhabit the deadened world of the protagonist, are made uncomfortable by images of a woman trapped by her surroundings, by the rooms of her apartment, the high walls of the city and even the presence of the coastline. We watch her crawl apathetically around rooms padded in white sheets and mattresses. We are watching a woman suffering, trapped in the padded security of her own mind, fleeing the dangerous complexity of the world around her.

It is not until ingesting some kind of psychedelic substance that she is able to begin to face her entanglement and start to move towards release. The drug leaves her standing alone in a room manically laughing/screaming over and over again before finding herself in naught but her underwear being molested by some sort of monk, who we assume is either a psychotic projection of her imagination or the film maker's symbolic representation of her crisis and self loathing.

The film ends with our protagonist gaining some kind of peace of mind following the confrontation of her issues. It is at this point that the film is most effective; the relief of the character is tangible, we are made to share in the gentleness she feels towards the world and herself by the subtly executed illustration of catharsis. As she steps out into the sun and watches the tide splashing against the shore, the viewer is released from the narrow claustrophobic camera shots and suffocating black and white of the previous 50 minutes. Bright light floods the scene and as the camera slowly zooms out on the closing shot of the serene ocean, we breathe out, glad to be released from this thoroughly uncomfortable but involving world, but also feeling genuine empathy towards and happiness for the woman standing with a small smile on her face, released from her anguish.



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10 Commonsideside. Walkley. S10 1GB.
- The Vine Inn**
160 Cemetery Rd.
- The Porter Book Shop**
227 Sharrow Vale Rd.
- Rare & Racy**
164-6 Devonshire St.
- Mish Mash**
617 Ecclesall Rd.
- The Old Crown Inn.**
137 London Rd.
- Roney's Butchers.**
276 Sharrow Vale Rd.
- Cafe Euro**
72 John St
Nr CCC. Off London Rd.



RARE AND RACY. DEVONSHIRE ST. RAREANDRACY.CO.UK

RACE AND RACY IS A SHOP SPECIALISING IN ALL THINGS WEIRD AND WONDERFUL.

Located on Dev Green just down from West One and the Bowery, walking into this place is like stepping into a timeless boutique of sundries. Scouting out second-hand books on Yorkshire topography, perchance? Equestrianism? Anthropology? Mining? Old music mags? Or are you just on the lookout for a first edition? You will find all (and more) within these four walls. On the more arty scale of things, RnR features original watercolours, oil paintings, photography and prints by Yorkshire and Derbyshire artists like Phlegm and Jim Connolly. And the music...Where to start? A whole room lined with CDs and old LPs – extra special selections of jazz, bebop, blues, improv, world, classical, pop & rock, spoken word, soundtracks, electronica, ambient, experimental and noise. Ideal for strange rarities and miscellaneous goodness. Basically, if you love music that is non-commercial and doesn't fit the mould, come here.

The shop has a cool, laid-back atmosphere to suit its massive array of goods, a fact that makes it easy to lose an hour or so just immersing yourself. Possibly its best feature is its undeniable Sheffield-ness. Local bands sell their demos here and it is always stocked up with fan zines and cultural artifacts.

Rare and Racy is a browser's dream.

FOX'S WINES&SPIRITS. SHARROW LANE, S11.

It's been a good while since Foxy's emporium of speciality wares last got a shout from us, so here's a quick update.

In these bleak times of economic meltdown it is all too often the guy with the small business on the corner that really feels the pinch. Not Foxy. The key to his ongoing success appears to be diversity and speciality of stock (and of course a cheery greeting noon 'til night), with goods ranging from Afro- Caribbean foods and specialist haircare products to perhaps the most comprehensive collection of Bollywood DVDs and reggae vinyl in the city.

Add these rare finds to a shop with all your daily convenience needs and booze prices to rival any major retailer and it looks like a bright future for this chap. Fair play indeed.

TRAILER PARK BOYS. TRAILERPARKBOYS.COM

A Canadian mockumentary series based on a short film by Mike Clattenburg of the same name, Trailer Park Boys is the pinnacle of addictive comedy silliness. Following the down-and-out lives of Nova Scotian trailer park folk and their strangely alluring lifestyles, the show spans seven series crammed full of liquor, cannabis cultivation, random shootings, driveways fashioned from hash, cheeseburgers, barbeques, bad rapping, amateur porn, shopping carts, male prostitution, parking meter theft, cats, more liquor and a hand puppet called Conky.

Trailer Park Boys is a must-see comedy that makes light of the vicious cycle of petty crime and prison time like no other. Definitely recommended for fans of Curb Your Enthusiasm, the Office, Arrested Development and anything involving Christopher Guest.

RICH SMITH ILLUSTRATION. RICHSMITHILLUSTRATION.COM

Rich Smith is a brave man. A part-time illustrator since the 80s, he recently packed in the soul-sapping day job and made the leap of faith onto the most potentially perilous of paths - that of the 'struggling artist'.

After a good look through his portfolio, however, it is apparent that this leap is backed by plenty of proper graft, as well as a not inconsiderable talent. Rich has a clear aptitude for character-based illustration, with a keen eye for facial detail that make portraiture and caricature second nature to him, but has also clearly developed the necessary diversification required to survive on his craft alone.

He is now available for hire for any number of jobs from family scenes to album design, with the fundamentals of Mac trickery comfortably covered, whilst maintaining that priceless skill in illustration that reminds us that it all starts with a good ol' pencil.

FAVOURITES.

OUR PICK OF THE BUNCH.

GAME AND MOVIE. 667 CHESTERFIELD RD, WOODSEATS. 0114 258 8338.

What? A games and DVD shop that's both independent AND ridiculously cheap?! Believe it folks, it's real. Having recently ventured out to Woodseats to expand the distribution of the mag I stumbled upon this sweet find and have been raving to anyone who'd listen about the marvel of Game & Movie ever since.

Started four years ago by budding, local entrepreneur Barry at the tender age of 16, Game & Movie specialise in pre-owned games and DVDs, boasting the cheapest prices in all of Sheffield. No mean feat by any means, and for a small shop his range is quite staggering including the latest releases for all consoles.

Those in Woodseats most likely know all about Barry's treasure trove but to those at the other end of Chezzzy road, it's well worth a look.

RECYCLE BIKES. 62-68 THIRWELL ROAD. S8 9TF. 0114 250 7717 / RECYCLEBIKES.CO.UK.

Has the festive period left you broke and overweight? Look no further...

ReCycle Bikes was set up in 2001 and has since become the don of Sheffield biking. Its friendly employees offer bicycle maintenance classes, workshops and adventure days with a smile. They invest time into revamping old rides, making their second-hand models ridiculously cheap (£15+ for kids, £30+ for adults). Found on Thirwell Road in Heeley, ReCycle also runs youth training programmes four days a week for 14-to-16 year olds as part of a contract with the Council, aimed at getting them into employment or further education.

A gem.

DEVONSHIRE CAT. DEVONSHIRE GREEN. 0114 279 6700. DEVONSHIRECAT.CO.UK.

Five reasons why the Dev Cat should be constantly full:

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5. It's all about their chorizo burger.





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